NEW! N64 MAGAZINE FOR NINTENDO 64 FANS

Future Publishing
ISSUE 1
APRIL 1997
£2.95

N64 MAGAZINE



TUROK
It's pure dino-mite!

MARIO GO! GO!
Super Mario 64 reviewed, rated... and completed!

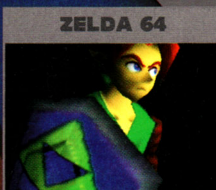


PLUS! JAPANESE AND U.S. NEWS AND REVIEWS!

STARFOX 64



ZELDA 64



PERFECT STRIKER



AND A HUGE MARIO KART 64 REVIEW!



ISSUE 1

"Morning. Not too bad, thanks. And y... Hello. What's this poking out of our Nintendo 64?

1. **N64** Magazine will recognise that the Nintendo 64 is the best games console ever created, and that its best games are utterly incredible!
2. **N64** Magazine will review all new Nintendo 64 games, from Europe, America and Japan!
3. **N64** Magazine will employ only the most skillful reviewers!
4. **N64** Magazine will play the big games properly – through to the end, no matter how hard they are – before passing judgement!
5. **N64** Magazine will pack every page with vital tips and secrets!
6. **N64** Magazine is completely independent, and will not be afraid to call a crap game a crap game!
7. **N64** Magazine will reveal the very latest exciting pictures of new N64 games from around the world!
8. **N64** Magazine will not pad itself out with tedious waffle when it could be writing interesting stuff or showing great pictures!
9. **N64** Magazine will give advice on all aspects of N64 gaming whenever its readers might need it!
10. **N64** Magazine will be everything a Nintendo 64 fan could possibly want, every month!



"Cripes! We'd better get on with it, then. Here goes..."



N64 MAGAZINE

N64 MAGAZINE FOR NINTENDO 64 FANS

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Issue 1, April 1997

N64 MAGAZINE ARENA

Reviewed, rated... and completed!

WIN! THE ULTIMATE N64 SET-UP!

It's every Nintendo fan's dream! Find out how it could all be yours on page 112.



PLANET 64

News from the world of Nintendo 64

Starts on page 6

IMPORT ARENA

The latest Japanese and American games investigated and rated.

Starts on page 66

TEAM 64

The most important part of any magazine are the people who write it. Or so this bunch think.



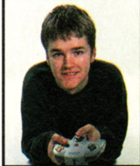
Jonathan Davies
His oak-panelled *PC Gamer* study having been consumed by fire, Jonathan has started afresh, revitalised by the Nintendo 64's brilliance. In fact, he's almost back to his old *Super Play* self, and has been playing *Mario Kart 64* almost constantly ever since it arrived from Japan.
Game of the month: *Mario Kart 64*



Wil Overton
Struck on the head as a child by a pile of manga, Wil genuinely seems to believe he's Japanese. He'd almost have us convinced, with his incessant playing of baffling games like *Mah Jong Master* and *Wonder Project J2*, were it not for an Essex accent you could cut with a white stiletto.
Game of the month: *Wonder Project J2*



James Ashton
While James likes to play it cool in his Gestapo-style leather coat, he's secretly extremely excited about the world of Nintendo 64. He mainly plays 3D shoot-'em-ups like *Shadows of the Empire*, and won't forgive Tim for whisking *Turok* out from under his nose.
Game of the month: *J-League Perfect Striker*



Tim Weaver
Sports-game-obsessive Tim is spending most of his time at the moment with *J-League Perfect Striker*. He has the unfortunate habit of playing to the accompaniment of a stream of strange obscenities, his current favourite involving a particularly unsavoury-sounding variety of cake and a soup made thereof.
Game of the month: *J-League Perfect Perfect Striker*



Zy Nicholson
Another who's risen from the flames of *Super Play*, Zy spends too much time playing games to worry much about anything else. He's become probably the Western world's foremost authority on *Super Mario 64*, and has completed it more times than there are holes in his trousers.
Game of the month: *Super Mario 64*

How can something so brilliant fit into so small a box? N64 Magazine carefully dismantles a Nintendo 64 in an effort to discover what makes it tick. We find out:
- What all the chips do.
- How Reality Immersion works.
- The differences between PAL and NTSC N64s.
- How to get import games working.



REGULARS

IT'S ALMOST FINISHED! HERE'RE NINTENDO'S LATEST SHOTS...







Plainly, the bosses are the stand-out feature. Their screen-filling parts do their darndest to dispose of your animal hides.



There are, naturally, a number of selectable views...



... including this first-person, outside the cockpit set-up...



... and a behind-the-craft view. The second one is probably best



The desert planet gives you the chance to play as a tank.



Once again, General Pepper has plenty of info to pass on.

STAR

Nintendo's super



Starfox 64		
NINTENDO		
	96M	 1-4
28 April	UK release	August



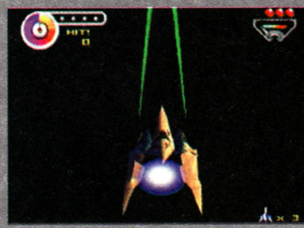


△ *Slippy Toad might look like a gormless twot but – damn your eyes! – if he doesn't know a bit about flying. Oh yes.*









Bringing much-loved 16-bit classics to its dazzling new console has proven somewhat less troublesome for Nintendo than we once might have thought. What had previously been thought to be a minefield of a task – bringing the sublime *Mario* games into a revolutionised 3D world – passed with nary a whimper (not to say, an effort of pure genius). And, by following it up with such uniquely joyous romps as *Pilotwings*, *Wave Race* and *Mario Kart*, you'd be forgiven for thinking that there had to be a snag somewhere.

Well, with Nintendo's fifth title – and fifth 64-bit refurbishment of a former SNES favourite – only a matter of weeks away, it seems things certainly aren't about to falter for the mind-genies in Kyoto. Whereas a year ago, this regrouping of Fox McCloud and friends looked and moved like it was in dire need of some divine intervention, the near-complete version running to selected Japanese journos this month suggested *StarFox 64* was about to do for small furry animals what *Mario* had done for plumbers.

It's probably fair to say that the original SNES version divided opinion. Some believed its FX Chip-driven visuals combined to an unbelievably fine effect with its gritty intergalactic space-fest theme. Others dared label it "tiresome" due to the low freedom of movement that its on-track game engine brought about. Trying to maintain those bits deemed superb and correct what may have originally been wrong was always going to be the trickiest job for Miyamoto and his band of happy programming staff.

The results, though, are astounding. *StarFox's* all-new 3D world is strikingly recreated with a range of lush, multi-levelled environments. Like *Pilotwings*, the freedom of movement is magnificent with very few levels restricting you to a

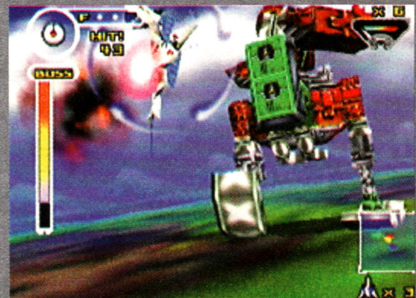
GO! GO! ▷

FOX 64
furry animals prepare for launch!

Some glorious three-dimensional landscapes help set the scene nicely. And, of course, there are those formidable explosions to look forward to. ▷









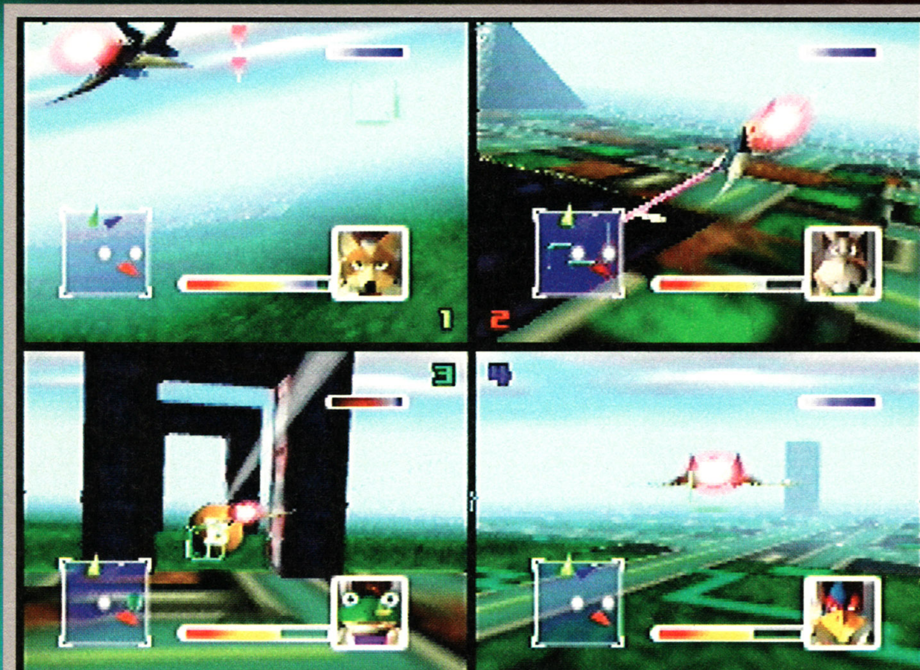
track system. Instead, you're carefully guided through the levels via soundbites from the control centre, eventually meeting up with the screen-filling spectacle of the bosses.

And this is where *StarFox 64* is likely to excel. Coming in various guises – ranging from an automaton Ostrich to a Tank-like robot – the bosses roam about the land in waves of glorious animation, their mechanised whirr accompanied by phenomenal amounts of firepower. The explosions they can cause are quite wondrous but the intelligence of the machines is what really stands out. The AI is spot-on with the massive metallic behemoths responding cleverly to your spurts of fire. All in all, it all makes for some outrageously entertaining battle scenes.

Surely the finest new addition to *StarFox 64*, though, is its four-player mode. In a split-screen system – similar to that of *Mario Kart* – players can take on the roles of Fox McCloud, Falco Lambarty, Peppy Hare and Slippy Toad in a four-way take on the single-player game. Here, things can turn towards violence or co-operation as players are given the choice of working together or taking each other out of the skies. Naturally, the second option is far more interesting but either way the bosses won't pick and choose: they'll opt to take you *all* out.

Miyamoto's dream for *StarFox 64* was to turn it into a B-movie that you could actually play and, via a series of brilliant animated intros and frequent pre-level interjections, he's managed just that. The grand-scale enemies – recalling the city-swallowing Godzilla films of yesteryear – combine with an overall inkling that – as with most Nintendo games – *StarFox* doesn't take itself too seriously, to inject some most-welcome tongue-in-cheekness into the proceedings.

Plainly, the words 'baited' and 'breath' describe the way we're waiting for *Starfox*. Although a European release isn't expected until the end of the year, we'll be taking the game apart in our import section in a couple of issues' time. N64



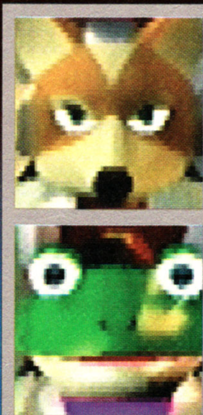
4-PLAYER

As mentioned previously, the four-player, split-screen option now available in *StarFox* is likely to present an extra-specially joyous jaunt through space. Not only is Fox able to strut his cunning stuff but the presence of Peppy, Falco and Slippy open the way for a quad-pronged attack on the despicably evil enemy robots. The sight of four metallic monsters simultaneously swooping through the sky is something to greatly look forward to. Goodness, yes.

The four-player option is likely to induce further waves of excitement amongst us Europeans. Be sure, though, we'll have a full, unabridged account of how this new addition adds to the flavour next month. Certainly, if it plays as good as it looks, we're in for an exciting time.

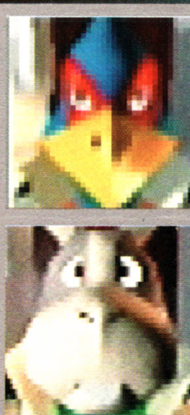
CHARACTER BUILDING

The characters from the original *StarFox* have returned in beautiful rendered formats. Giving you a quick A-Z seems appropriate…



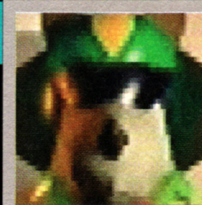
FOX McCLOUD
Of course, Fox is once again the main – er – stoaty thing, leading by example. He likes a bit of tipple and loves his Saturday nights out – so we're told.

SLIPPY
Bug-eyed freak he may be but Slippy easily lays claim to being the first 'personality toad' since Toady from Wind in the Willows. Which is – you know – nice.



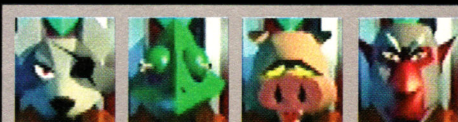
FALCO
Looks like he belongs with the nasties but Falco actually has a heart of gold and frequently helps old ladies across the road. His beak is now 400 cms in diameter.

PEPPY
After his family contracted myxomatosis, Peppy decided to leave the New Forest and take to the intergalactic skies with his friends. Fox once tried to eat him, though.



GENERAL PEPPER
Always on-hand to give the four pilots a helping hand, the old scroat is a space-battling veteran in the Obe Wan mould. Gives advice like it's going out of fashion.

THE VILLAINS
This 'orrible little lot will have you out of the sky and into an early grave quicker than you can say "General Pepper has nice sunglasses." Be careful!





This giant spider certainly has Slippy living up to his name. The green-headed amphibian is worrying (justifiably) about the size of the feisty red arachnid.

JOLT INTO ACTION!

Although highly unlikely to be included in either American or European copies of *StarFox 64*, a Jolt Pack will be packaged free with Japanese copies of the game. This new idea from Nintendo reproduces explosions in the game as vibrations in your controller. The pack simply slots in where the memory card normally sits and shakes, rattles and rolls as you do your darndest to take out the bosses. As the forthcoming *Blast Corps* will also be compatible with the pack, it seems likely that Nintendo will retail it as a separate piece of kit over here. A price point somewhere between £15 and £20 looks realistic to us.

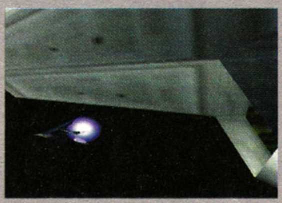


COOL CINEMAS!

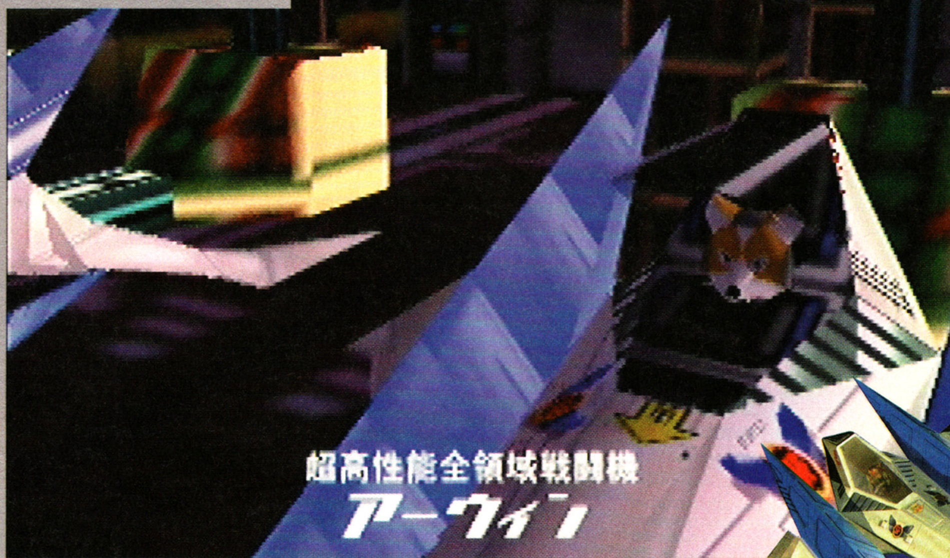
As we've already mentioned, Miyamoto's wish to have a fully animated real-time intro is vividly fulfilled. The results are quite astounding...



The intro is truly fabulous. The real-time flavour is triumphantly brought across.



Fox McCloud once again leads the way with his dynamic facial hair and sleek, silky spacecraft.

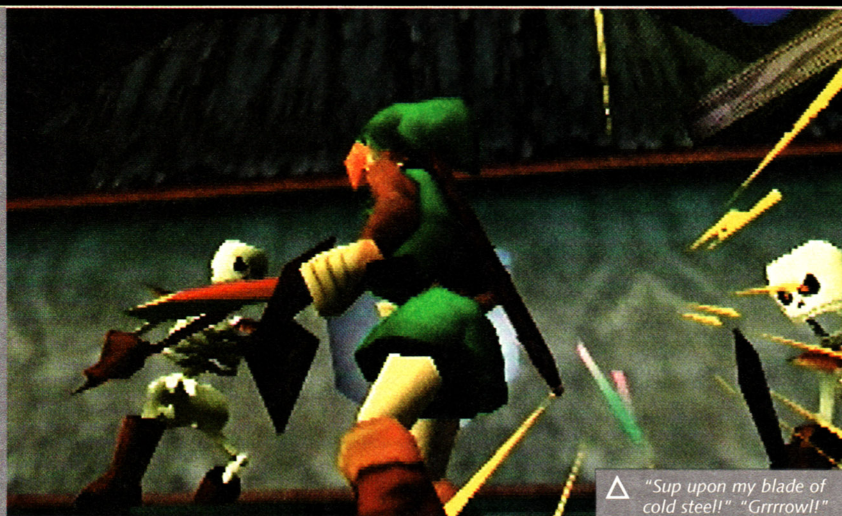




Miyamoto's fascination with animals is freakish but – bless him – he does deliver the goods.

STARFOX 64

TO BE CONTINUED... All being well we should be reviewing *Starfox 64* in issue 3.



△ "Sup upon my blade of cold steel!" "Grrrrowl!"



△ A text box will pop up at this point, we assume..

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA 64

we're missing link

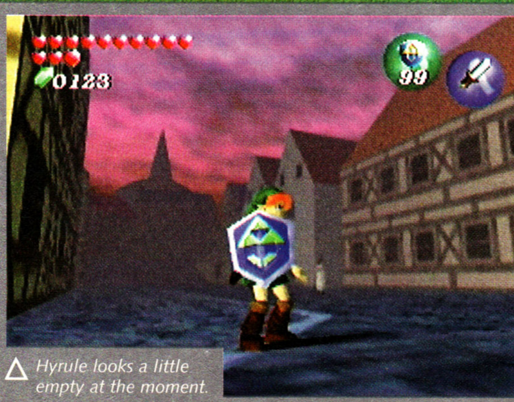


The Legend Of Zelda 64		
NINTENDO		
	Size TBA	 1
Release TBA		

Three years have passed since the world was last given a *Zelda* game to play, which is an awfully long time for the pointy-hatted Link to have been gone. The original idea was that *Zelda 64* would be the first 64DD game (see page 16), meaning that everyone would simply have to run out and buy a 64DD to play it. But things have gone slightly – erm – 'awry' at Nintendo HQ. They're not ready to launch the 64DD yet, and things have gone a bit quiet games-wise in Japan, with many potential N64 buyers holding off until there's a decent 64 RPG. So Nintendo have decided to release *Zelda* early on cart, with a disk version possibly following later with the 64DD's launch.

But, while Nintendo have liberally distributed pictures of Link in his new 3D splendour, allowing tantalising glimpses of him exploring villages and hacking at monsters, they're being their usual inscrutable selves when it comes to explaining how the game will actually work.

We can only guess, therefore, at the storyline. *Zelda 64* is bound to take place in the land of Hyrule again, for example, and it's bound to involve rescuing the kidnapping-prone Zelda from a dungeon somewhere. And once again you'll be wandering around chatting to people (there won't be speech, just text), sword-fighting baddies and solving puzzles. The first three *Zelda* games were so great because, like all the best Japanese RPGs, they immersed you completely in a sort of



△ Hyrule looks a little empty at the moment.



◁ Hack baddies to bits with your sword. Especially this bizarre welly-wearing skeleton.









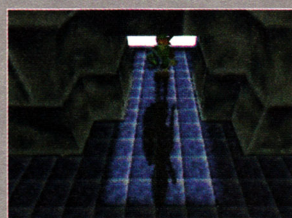
△ Once again, Link doesn't travel anywhere without his pointy sword. If you see anyone dressed like this wandering around your town, it's probably best to steer clear of them: they're almost certainly being 'cared for in the community'.



△ He jumps! (Or trips over, maybe.) Just like that, Link takes on an entire new dimension, the rogue.

Role Playing Games provide plenty of opportunity for spooky locations. Amazing N64 special effects are likely to abound, like when Link discovers this Triforce. ▽









'interactive storybook', and it seems likely that this approach will be continued.

Zelda 64's big advance, meanwhile, involves the move into 3D. You'll now have far more control over Link, who'll be able to walk, run and jump around the new 3D Hyrule, as well as attacking enemies in a variety of ways. The pictures show him doing all these things, a far cry from the previous games where he scuttled about in 2D. It's reasonable to assume, too, that solving puzzles will now involve a bit more than simply carrying objects from place to place. Hopefully this will mean that *Zelda 64* won't be quite so straightforward a romp as previous *Zelda* games have been.

Everything else is merely speculation at the moment, though – even the release date. We reckon *Zelda 64* ought to be out in time for Christmas. Any later than that and the the RPG-hungry Japanese public are likely to take to the streets with real swords. N64

TIME BANDIT

1987
The Legend of Zelda (NES)
As well as doing tremendously well in Japan, Nintendo's first *Zelda* game sold America on the delights of RPGing. Link never looked back from this



1988
The Adventure of Link (NES)
The eagerly-awaited sequel made an abortive foray into a more platform-gamey, side-on kind of environment.



1991
The Legend of Zelda III: A Link to the Past (SNES)
Bigger, more colourful and with a smashing 3D scrolling map, the SNES *Zelda* was the best yet.



1994
The Legend of Zelda IV: Link's Awakening (GameBoy)
A superb, perfectly-formed game, packed into a cartridge the size of an After Eight.



1997
The Legend of Zelda 64
The Nintendo 64's powers allow *Zelda* to move completely into 3D. Hopefully, it won't lose the simple charm of the previous games in the process.



TO BE CONTINUED... We'll be following *Zelda 64's* development every month in **N64**.

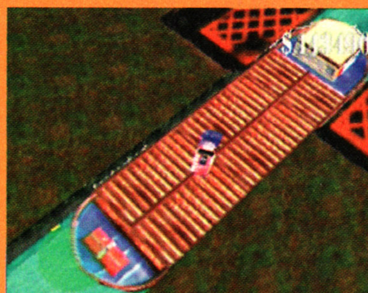


BLAST

nuclear explosions, mass



OK, so this doesn't look like your average bulldozer, but it is, indeed, part of your mechanised repertoire.



The more destruction you cause, the healthier your bank balance becomes.





This freaky thing is, again, one of your bulldozers. Wrecks buildings like there's no tomorrow. Yep.









The explosions in Blast Corps are grand-scale, screen-filling beauties. And then there's the nuclear version...



This sequence may well be part of the game's intro.

CORPS

destruction and, er, bulldozers...

Blast Corps (Blastdozer)
NINTENDO/RARE
 96M | 1-4
Out Now UK release August



After the uninspiring excesses of arcade-conversion *Killer Instinct Gold*, Rare are readying themselves for their first wholly original N64 release. Hopes are high for *Blast Corps* – scheduled for release at the end of March in Japan and America – especially as it's been nearly two years in development.

Taking the future world as its starting point, *Blast Corps* sets you down in the midst of the 21st century. Socially and environmentally things have gone a little haywire. District upon district are suffering from acute pollution, with clouds of harmful gases doing their darndest to dispose of all human life. What's also rather unfortunate is that a highly explosive chemical freight carrier is steaming towards the city on a collision course with, well, everything. Which is, of course, where you come in.

You're a member of the Blast Corps, a highly professional – hey, not to say secret – organisation dedicated to destruction and rescue. Your task is to destroy anything that lies in the way of the speeding freight carrier. Unfortunately the 'anything' in question amounts to a few billion dollars of urban sprawl. There's also another substantial snag: the slightest vibration or contact with the freight carrier will cause it to explode and wipe out half the world. Nice.

So, in order to dispose of the fine-fettled architecture standing inconsiderately in the way, there are eight different bulldozers to choose from. The Ram Dozer, Backlash, Skyfall, Ballista, Side Swipe, J-Bomb, Thunderfist Plus and Cyclone Suit are all available to the player at various points along the way, as well as a series of less heavyweight vehicles, including a muscle car, crane and police motor.

Once a path has been cleared in a stage, you can go back on yourself and complete other sub-missions. These range from the collection of Radiation Dispersal Units (RDUs) and the locating of satellite antennae, to the evacuation of local residents and the rescue of six key scientists. It's these six who have vital information regarding the freight carrier and, somewhat more importantly, the survival of the human race.

The game is split into around 60 levels, along with a bevy of bonus games. It's in these sub-games that the influence of Nintendo is at its strongest: one requires you to push explosives boxes into the six pockets of a pool table with a tractor. However, Rare deserve a great deal of credit for their work on the game, bringing a thoroughly strange idea to glorious fruition.

Graphically, *Blast Corps* is unlikely to trouble the likes of *Mario 64*. Although the power of the N64 has allowed Rare to include new visual twists such as reflective metallic textures and rippling water effects, as the developers will admit themselves, you really need to play the game to fully appreciate it.

A European release date for *Blast Corps* hasn't been announced, although considering Rare's considerable influence in their home town Blighty, its debut can't be too far away. The decision to steer clear of *Donkey Kong Country* (at least until they unveil their "secret project" as being just that) is a welcome one and, with *GoldenEye 007* well on the way, the lads and lasses from Twycross look set to experience a bumper 1997. 



Yepper, this is more like the sort of demolition we know and love.



Bikes might not be the sort of thing you'd use to drive into a building...



... but in Blast Corps they're readily available to gather you some dollars.



This fabulous 'dozer has the capability to knock down whole skyscrapers in one go. Its side arms offer a veritable arms-dealer of explosion potential as well.

TO BE CONTINUED... We'll have a huge review of the Japanese version next issue.



PLANET 64

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A WORD IN YOUR SHELL-LIKE

'Cor,' said Wil. 'Blimey,' said James. 'Crumbs,' said Zy. 'Er,' I said. And Tim said something we couldn't print even if we wanted to.

And that's about all we could manage when we caught our first glimpse of *Super Mario 64* running on the Nintendo 64. We'd played great games before, but *Mario 64* was simply in a different league – technically eye-popping, and played in a completely different way to anything else. In that moment, the magic surrounding the Saturn and PlayStation vanished and suddenly we all desperately wanted a chunky, dark-grey Nintendo 64. And, being magazine types, we decided that we also wanted nothing more than to get together and write the best Nintendo 64 magazine imaginable. Luckily our sinister besuited paymasters approved, their icy corporate hearts melting when they saw *Mario 64*. And work was begun on **N64 MAGAZINE**.

That was last year. Since then we've played the astonishing *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*, the awe-inspiring *Pilotwings 64*, the sublime *Mario Kart 64* (which I'm by far the best at), the brilliant *J-League Perfect Striker* (which, embarrassingly, I'm useless at), and, basically, every other Nintendo 64 game that's been released across the world. (Even *Mah Jong Master*, which weirdo Wil perversely loves.) And we've rapidly come to the conclusion that the Nintendo 64 is the best thing that's happened to video games for years.

And we've also, we hope, assembled a magazine that matches up to the machine. We're all Nintendo 64 devotees, and every month we plan to fill **N64 MAGAZINE** with everything we find out, from the biggest new game scoop to the tiniest playing tip. We'll disassemble every new game completely, exposing its every last secret and evaluating it ruthlessly. In fact, before awarding a *Star Game* badge we'll actually complete the game, right through from start to finish, to ensure it really is great. (N64 games are incredibly expensive, after all, so you wouldn't want to be lumbered with a crap one.)

If you've already managed to track down a Nintendo 64, then well done – they're incredibly scarce at the moment thanks to Nintendo's cruel marketing strategy. (Sorry, 'limited production capacity'.) And if you haven't, I urge you to try. Even at a bank-account-evacuating £250, the N64 is worth every penny.



JONATHAN DAVIES
EDITOR

Ninte



Britain's first N64 owners

The Bath branch of Electronics Boutique opened especially early (7.30 in the morning!) on Saturday, March 1st to sell their allotment of 25 Nintendo 64s, all of which had been reserved in advance. N64 was waiting there, bleary-eyed, to meet some of the first Nintendo 64 owners in Britain.



Hello. Who are you? Fergus Reid. **How old are you?** 13. **So, when did you reserve your N64?** Ooh, in about the middle of January. I paid for it all then as well. **Why are you so keen to own one?** Because there are some brilliant games coming out for it. **Have you bought any of them?** Yes – *Mario 64*. **What'll you be getting next?** *Turok*, *Mario Kart* and maybe *Doom*, I don't know. **If you could have any machine in**

THE ALTERNATIVE

The first non-Nintendo controllers and things have arrived, sort of. Spectravideo's *Super Pad* costs £29.99 (the same price as the Nintendo controller will be when it goes on sale separately), their enormous *Arcade Shark Stick* is £59.99, and their *Multicase* is £29.99. They're also doing a 1 Mb Memory Card (that's four times the size of the standard N64 Controller Pak) for £19.99. We haven't actually seen any of this stuff yet but as soon as we do, we'll assess it all fully.



NONSENSE OF THE MONTH

No. 1 The 64 Cassette Case

Currently selling for ¥270 (£1.37) each in Japan and available in four different colours, are these stylish N64 cart holders. They're see-through, affording an excellent view of your carts (almost, in fact, as if they weren't in cases at all), and at the press of a button a small spring in the bottom causes your cart to pop up *very slightly*. They'll even stack up horizontally. Except then, of course, you can't see what games are inside. Nonsense.



ndo 64 'selling like hot cakes'

But thousands of Nintendo fans still go hungry.

It was hardly a surprise, but within hours of the UK's measly allotment of 20,000 Nintendo 64s going on sale on Saturday, March 1st, all had been snapped up by a Nintendo-obsessed British public. Hurrah, then. Nintendo got their 'Sold out' headlines, and shops were deluged with customers. The only people to go away disappointed, in fact, were the thousands of Nintendo devotees who hadn't been able either to reserve an N64 or to get up early enough to grab an unspoken-for one.

Many shops, such as Electronics Boutique and HMV, ran reservation schemes, and were taking deposits right at the beginning of the year. Others, like Dixons and Comet, didn't bother, and had people camped on their doorsteps as dawn broke. No shop, though, had more than about 25 machines to sell, with most limited to about five, and some with as few as two. Two! Tch.

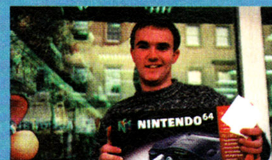
And it was the same story across the rest of Europe, and in Australasia too, with each country being rationed in a similar fashion. The only place not to have received N64s yet is France. No-one seems quite sure why but the poor French should get their machines fairly soon.

If you haven't managed to get your hands on an N64 yet, the picture shouldn't be quite so bleak now. THE, Nintendo's UK distributor, were airfreighting more machines into the country the following week, and

GO! GO!



the world, that could do anything you wanted, what would it be? A Nintendo 64.



Who are you, then? Ian Love. **How old are you?** 19. **When did you reserve your N64, then?** Erm, about three-and-a-half months ago. Crumbs. **Why do you want one so badly?** 'Cos it's the best thing around. **Have you bought any games for it?** Yep, I've got *Mario* and *Shadows*, and I'm going to get *Turok* on Tuesday when it comes out. **And then what next?** Um, *Mario Kart 64*, *ISS 64*, if that looks any good, and *Killer Instinct Gold*. **If you could have any machine in the world, what would you have?** This, obviously. Or maybe one of those Pentium Pros.



Hello there. Who are you? I'm Pete. And I'm Jo. And you're…? 21. And, er… 20. **How long has your N64 been reserved?** For about a month. **And why do you want one?** Well, we've got an NES, a SNES, a Game Boy, a Pocket Game Boy, a PlayStation, a Mega Drive and a PC, so we wanted to complete the set. **Blimey. Have you bought any N64 games?** Just *Mario* at the moment. **And then what?** Well, *Pilotwings* looks quite good. And that *Turok*… well, I don't know. **If you could have any machine in the world, what would it be?** We'll be happy with this for a while. Oh, although maybe a big telly to play it on would be good.

Hello! Who are you? Brian Woodcock. **And how old are you?** 25. **Hmm. When did you reserve your N64?** On… let's see… the 25th of January. **Why do you want one?** Well, it's the best thing to come along, isn't it? **Yep. Which games have you got there?** *Mario* and *Pilotwings*. **Are you going to get any more?** Probably *Mario Kart* and *Wave Race*. **If you could have any machine in the world, what would it be?** Well… the best PC they do, I suppose.





Good morning. Who are you? I'm Adrian Thompson. **And you're…?** 19. **When did you reserve your N64?** Back at the beginning of January. I lost the vouchers they gave me, though, so I've had to pay the deposit twice. **And what are those games you've got there?** There's *Shadows*, *Mario* and *Pilotwings*. **Will you be getting any others?** Maybe *Turok*, but I'll probably wait for *Wave Race*.

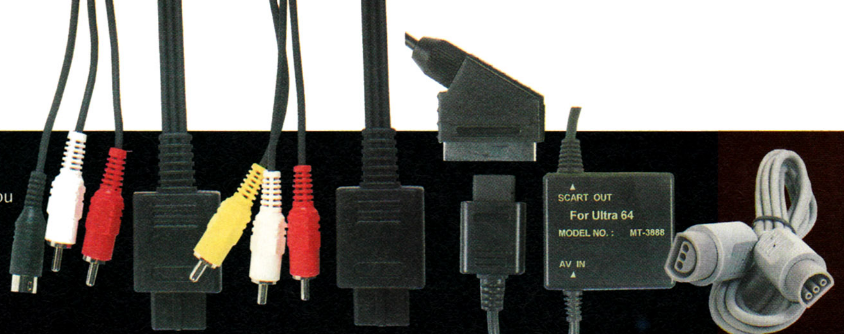
TAKE THE LEAD

Ever quick to see a market opportunity Fire Inc (01302) 751428have cashed in with some N64 accessories.

SFX Adaptor

Not the 'universal' adaptor it leads you to believe but an easy way to get around the problem of Japanese and American carts being slightly different shapes. Use this instead of taking a hack saw to your N64.





S-Video

For the best picture from you N64 choose this.

AV

Second best but still better than an RF adaptor.

Scart

Great for import N64 owners without S-Video.

X-Tender

If you really must sit *that* far away from the TV..





these should have filtered through to shops now. The plan is for 90,000 N64s to have gone on sale by the beginning of June. By this point Nintendo will have ramped-up their production of the machine to the point where there should be enough N64s for everyone.

Games-wise, just about everyone who's bought an N64 so far has also bought a copy of *Super Mario 64* to go with it. Very wise.

Pilotwings 64, *Shadows of the Empire* and *Turok* have also been doing well. And, er, that's about it for UK N64 releases at the moment. There'll be plenty more along soon, though, with the likes of *Wave Race*, *International Superstar Soccer 64* on the near horizon.

Oh, and someone probably said at some point: "It's selling like hot cakes." They sell very well as well. So we're told.

Japan 'a bit quiet'

by Jonathan Davies in Tokyo (for a week)



Gosh it's crowded here. Anyway, within 10 weeks of the system's launch in Japan on 23rd June last year, a whopping one million Nintendo 64's had been sold, largely on the strength of *Super Mario 64*. But since then things have sadly gone a bit quiet. The shelves in Akihabara, Tokyo's 'Electric Town' district where whole streets are lined by video game shops, are piled high with N64s that no-one seems to want. By contrast, during the week ending 31st January it was almost impossible to buy a PlayStation anywhere in Tokyo.

The reason? RPGs. Or, more specifically, *Final Fantasy VII*. January 31st was *Final Fantasy* Friday, and demonstrated how much of a boost Square's decision to develop for the PlayStation rather than the N64 has been for Sony. The N64, meanwhile, doesn't have a single role-player to its name, which is quite a shortcoming in RPG-crazy Japan. And since *Mario Kart 64* was released over there in mid-December there hasn't really been a big-name game of *any* description to help sell N64s.

Starfox 64 looks excellent, and will undoubtedly help the N64's cause in April. And *Turok* is being heavily advertised in Japan too, which is unusual as the Japanese aren't normally interested in American games. No-one there doubts the N64's power, and most of the main developers are busy working on titles. At Konami Computer Entertainment Osaka, for example, 80% of their efforts are being devoted to N64 games.

But what Nintendo really need to do is release *Zelda* – with or without the 64DD – and prove that N64 carts can carry off RPGs as well as Saturn and PlayStation CDs. The other two most popular gaming camps in Japan – the beat-'em-up and the racing game – could also do with some solid representation.

A Nintendo 64 was recently selling in Japan for around ¥24,000, (£120). But as **N64** went to press, Nintendo announced a price cut to ¥16,800 (£85). *Mario Kart* with an extra controller costs about ¥9,000 (£45), with *Super Mario 64* at ¥8,000 (£40) and some older, less successful games as low as ¥3,500 (£17.50). We'll let you know next month what effect the new, lower price has had.

Even bigg

The 64DD will increase the N64's extraordinary powers still further

N64 cartridges provide ample space for most purposes, as huge games like *Mario 64* and *Turok* prove. But there will come a time when developers, grown fat on the enormous capacity of CDs, will want to cram more into their games than one cart can possibly contain. And that's where Nintendo's N64 disc drive, codenamed the '64DD', will enter the equation.

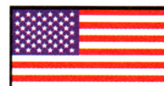
The 64DD falls somewhere between a PC-style disk drive and a CD-ROM drive, and plugs into the expansion slot in the bottom of the machine, with the N64 perched on top of it. It uses magnetic 3.75-inch discs that store 64Mb of data, up to half of which – and here's where the 64DD wins out over CD – can be written to by the N64. Speed is up over CD, too: the data transfer rate should be around 0.71 Megabytes per second, three times the speed of CD-based machines. The 64DD will also come with some extra RAM – 2 or 4 Megabytes, it hasn't been decided yet – to be plugged into that hole in the top of the N64, so data can be loaded into that before you start and the 64DD won't keep having to be accessed.

The 64DD's hardware is pretty much complete now, and installed in the R&D labs of the world's games developers. However, no public release date has been confirmed. As usual, Nintendo are holding back until there's software available that shows off the hardware at its best. *Zelda 64* was originally intended to be the 64DD's first game, but the delays with the hardware and the need to get an RPG out to satisfy Japanese N64 fans mean that *Zelda* could now possibly be released earlier on cart. If that was the case, the first 64DD game would be *Mother 3*, another RPG. Whatever the case with the games, quite when the 64DD will actually appear is uncertain. Here at **N64** *Magazine* we'd be surprised (though delighted) to see it before early next year.

There'll be more to the 64DD than just bigger games, though. Its writability raises a whole string of other exciting possibilities:

- Update discs could be released for games. More courses for *Mario Kart*, for example, or a stats update disc for

America 'frenzied'



by Doug Perry in San Francisco

Simply put, the 1996 launch by Nintendo of America (NOA) of the Nintendo 64 stunned the video-gaming world. It's not a surprise that the N64 was going to sell well in North America, but no-one could have predicted the savage, frenzied, clambering idiocy that followed its unusual launch. First, North Americans were told the unit would appear on September 29th, a Sunday, so kids wouldn't skip school to buy it. But smart (read: greedy) retailers put the unit on stores shelves three days early (a Thursday), throwing US gamers into a tizzy and Nintendo into a blissful stupor.

NOA originally announced they'd be delivering 750,000 units to North America by the winter holiday, but that number was well under the mark needed to satisfy demand. Toys 'R' Us

MAD GRANNY

Those crazy Americans. Their *National Enquirer* magazine (a sort of Sun with staples) reports that, when a new delivery of Nintendo 64s arrived on the day before Christmas Eve, shoppers were already queuing outside the Best Buy store at Aurora, Illinois . As the doors of the store were opened, however, a 58-year-old grandmother tried by-pass the queue and push her way to the front.

A stampede ensued, with angry shoppers incensed at this flagrant disregard for queuing etiquette. In the melee that followed, granny failed to grab an N64 and started to accuse another, more fortunate shopper of "stealing" her machine. The luckier shopper denied this and a slanging match ensued.

At the height of the argument, Granny launched herself at the other shopper, and punched her in the head. Fearing a full-scale riot, the store staff called the police and the offending Granny was arrested.

er games!

FIFA. However games would have to have been originally programmed with expansion in mind.

- Games could be customised. You could build some huge Sim Cities, and, if editors were released, create your own *Doom* and *Turok* levels.
- Games and demos could be downloaded over a modem, possibly using the Internet. It's rumoured that Nintendo are considering building a modem into the 64DD itself, which would be great.
- You could have something like in Sega's *NiGHTS*, whereby characters evolve depending on how you play the game. Only better, obviously.

The 64DD sounds like a very desirable N64 add-on indeed. We'll keep you up to date as its development continues, and let you know the moment a launch date (anywhere in the world) is announced.



reckoned they alone could sell 1 million by the end of the year. NPD Research, which does the TRSTS sales analysis, reported that at launch, N64 sold four times the number of PlayStations and 10 times as many as Sega Saturn had done the year before. In October, Nintendo managed to increase the number of deliveries to 1.2 million by Christmas.

N64 has now sold-through over 1.75 million units in North America, and although shortages – which pundits believe are created by Nintendo to cause a shark-like frenzy for the 64-bit console – are still a problem, the public hasn't gotten enough, and the unit still sells at an astounding pace. Games are also difficult to get unless they're bought on the day of their release. (Because of extreme shortages of LucasArts *Shadows of the Empire*, the game is now selling for as much as $100 in some stores, with some people already buying it as a 'collector's item'). Selling at a competitive $199 (about £120), the same price as Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation, the N64 is on its way to penetrating as many as 5-7 American million homes by the end of this year.

It's... THE N64 VIDEO



A feast of exciting new N64 games. And it's free!

Here's something you don't see every day. As if N64 Magazine wasn't great enough already, to celebrate its launch we've compiled a half-hour tape stuffed with footage of the best Nintendo 64 games – both the ones you can buy now and the ones that are coming later this year. And we've glued it to the front! Here's the menu:

PART 1

The Shoshinkai Video
This was handed-out to visitors to Nintendo's Shoshinkai show in Tokyo late last year. The commentary's all in Japanese, but you'll get the gist of it, and the games look fantastic. There's:

Mario Kart 64 — **Nintendo**
UK release June/July.

Starfox 64 — **Nintendo**
Late summer.

Blast Corps — **Nintendo/Rare**
March in Japan, August here.

J-League Perfect Striker — **Konami**
June (as *International Superstar Soccer 64* in the UK).

Wonder Project J2 — **Enix**
Out now in Japan; UK release unlikely.

The Glory of St Andrews — **Seta**
Ditto.

Pro King Baseball — **Imagineer**
Out now in Japan; no UK release planned as yet.

Mah Jong Master — **Konami**
Out now in Japan; no UK release planned as yet.

Shadows of the Empire — **Nintendo/LucasArts**
Out now.

Goldeneye — **Nintendo/Rare**
No release date yet.

Yoshi's Island 64 — **Nintendo**
Out towards the end of summer.

Kirby's Air Ride — **Nintendo**
Recently taken back to the drawing board for a complete re-design.

Go Go!! Troublemakers — **Enix/Treasure**
No release date yet.

Dual Heroes — **Hudson**
No release date news yet.

Rev Limit — **Seta**
Late summer release in Japan. Maybe end of the year for UK.

64 Oozumo — **Bottom Up**
No news yet.

Turok: Dinosaur Hunter — **Acclaim**
Out now!

Ganbare Goemon 5 — **Konami**
No release date yet.

Blade & Barrel — **Kemco**
Scheduled for March in Japan.

Zelda 64 — **Nintendo**
Late this year.

PART 2

Those games in full
Here's a lingering, mouthwatering look at three of Nintendo's key N64 games.

Super Mario 64 — **Nintendo**
The only way to appreciate why *Mario 64* really is the best video game in the world is to see it in action.

Pilotwings 64 — **Nintendo/Paradigm**
Take to the skies in a number of different ways. The graphics are face-slappingly good.

Wave Race 64 — **Nintendo**
Take some incredibly realistic water and add some high-speed jet-ski racing. Guaranteed success.

PART 3

Plus!
Some more games we managed to get footage of.

Killer Instinct Gold — **Nintendo/Rare**
Out now in the US, and in May in the UK. See our review on page 76.

FIFA 64 — **Electronic Arts**
Out early in April – review next month. It's not good news, *FIFA* fans.

Doom 64 — **GT**
Out in early April in the US, but no UK date yet.

Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey — **GT**
Out now in the US, no UK date yet.

PART 4

Mission Impossible & Turok Dinosaur Hunter
A couple of 'trailers'.

Mission Impossible — **Ocean**
Ocean aren't showing the actual game yet, so they've given us the film trailer instead as a sort of taster. Look out for an exclusive preview in our next issue.

Turok: Dinosaur Hunter — **Acclaim**
Out now
Acclaim's in-shop promotional video, filled with dinosaurs. Tim gets 'scared behind the eyes' by this.



And – good grief – there are heaps more great N64 games on the way. The next few pages of Planet 64 bring you the latest pictures of the best-looking, along with some other bits and bobs.

Let's off-road!

Three rally games and only one console. Join us as the mud starts to fly on the N64.

AMAZING RALLY FACT
Japanese car builders currently dominate rally sport. Despite being banned from races for a year due to 'technical irregularities', the four-wheel-drive Toyota Celica has become the most successful rally car of all time.

If the N64 is so great, where are all the racing games? It's a question that might be worrying you, and with good reason. Every games machine needs a racer to be proud of – the Saturn has *Sega Rally* and the PlayStation *Wipeout* and *Ridge Racer* amongst others. So far, the N64 only has *Cruis'n USA*. And as our import review on page 91 shows, that's just good old fashioned rubbish.

But cheer up, disheartened racing fans. There are dozens of high-octane titles in development all over the world, from F1 games to touring car street racers. Three of the most developed, the most nearly ready to be packaged into carts and sent on their way, are all off-road rally games. They're being designed by various mates of Nintendo both in Japan and America, and have various this-year release dates pencilled on them. And, as luck would have it, we know just about everything about all of them. We do. Look!

REV LIMIT







Don't expect this view to be available. Looks like a rendered intro to us.

AMAZING RALLY FACT
Rally sport was actually invented by aristocratic Romans who held single-horse chariot races around the grounds of their summer villas. Because of the rough terrain the sport was even more dangerous than racing in the more usual Circus arena.

Seta may not be a household name in the UK, but sharper-minded gamers might remember their underperforming SNES title *F1: Exhaust Heat*. *Rev Limit's* lack of a good pedigree will worry some, but as developing successful N64 titles has nothing to do with experience on other platforms, it would be best to judge Seta on the quality of the final game.

And on initial indications, *Rev Limit* looks like an exciting prospect. Superficially less a rally and more a touring car championship with countryside sections, visually it owes a lot to Namco's *Ridge Racer*, and may maintain that style of drive. However, as no playable versions have yet been available, quite which style of driving will predominate or even how well the game makes use of the analogue stick, is unknown.

At the moment it seems that *Rev Limit* will feature real car damage, rather than the magic indestructibility of most racing games. Other welcome features will be realistically variable car attributes and at least three different play modes: short distance, long distance with pit stops and straight road racing. Unfortunately, as yet there's no word on a two-player split-screen – a major blow.

Rev Limit will be published by Seta in Japan, but as yet there's no indication who will distribute the title in the rest of the world. Watch this space…

Rev Limit		
SETA		
Japan	Size: TBA	1
Late '97		

MULTI RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

Multi Racing Championship
IMAGINEER/OCEAN
Size: TBA | 1-2
UK release **May**

One of the first Japanese games to pick up a confirmed UK publishing deal, *Multi Racing Championship* will soon be available in the UK through Ocean. The game is a straight rally simulator along the lines of *Sega Rally*, and promises to offer the same physical accuracy that made Sega's game a worldwide home and arcade hit.

The game will offer a wider range of cars than *Sega Rally* – possibly up to eight, with, it's promised, real handling and performance differences between them. The tracks will boast various types of surface, from sand to mud to tarmac, and be based in a variety of locations across the globe. The Japanese love of European rallying will almost certainly ensure some relatively familiar settings in the range of tracks on offer.

The game aims to be as accurate a representation of real rallying as possible, and will include varying track conditions and weather. Those gamers used to reading over-optimistic game previews will hope that variables like this will actually make a difference to the way the game plays rather than – as is all too often – merely be present as an afterthought. However, as nothing has yet been seen of the game outside of Japan, for the moment, informed speculation is about all we have to go on.

Short cuts, secret courses and custom cars are all promised, but, worryingly, no shots of a two-player mode exist. Single-player racing only would be a serious blow to gamers already used to four-player *Mario Kart*.

Harder news on *MRC* hopefully in our next issue. Our breath is fully baited.



Multi Racing Championship looks as if it will be the first of the three to be released in Britain.



AMAZING RALLY FACT
Four-wheel-drive cars revolutionised rally sport in the 1970s, with the Lancia Stratos leading the way. Four-wheel traction gives superior acceleration and grip but requires a completely different style of driving to fore or rear-wheel-drive cars.





TOP GEAR RALLY

Top Gear Rally
BOSS GAME STUDIOS
Size: TBA | 1-2
August

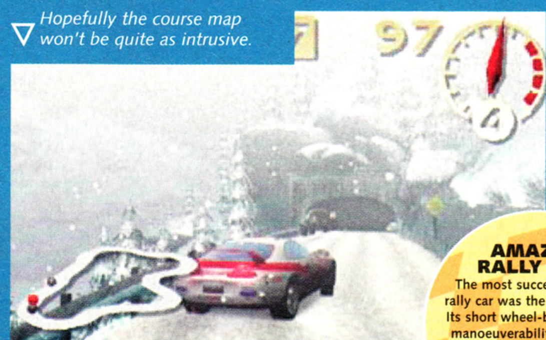
Perhaps the most eagerly-awaited racing title (due in part to its development at the American Boss Game Studios) is *Top Gear Rally*. QuickTime movies of the game, as well as a whole host of seductive stills, have been circulating the world's press for some time now, and only a person of severely reduced visual acuity could fail to be impressed. The track scenarios are lush, the cars – beautifully detailed of course – move realistically and, joy of joys, a split-screen two-player mode is up and running. Full steam ahead, it would seem.

Colin Gordon, vice president of Boss Studios, has elaborated on some of the game's structure. At least part will consist of a *Mario Kart*-esque 'Season' mode with a number of tracks going to make up individual competitions. Extra cars and tracks will be available once all the seasons have been completed and there's the definite possibility of a mirror or reverse mode as well.

Top Gear Rally's cars look set to be accurate representations of some of the world's most famous. Expect to see Toyota Supras, Ford Escort RS2000s and a host of other famous names as well as (rather bizarrely) a rallying Porshe 911. Some of the most impressive game shots show the night stages. Here racing takes place in the glare of headlights, and the optical effects are some of the best seen in a driving game.

Unfortunately *Top Gear Rally* has yet to find a British publisher, although it will almost certainly be released here. Standing as it does only half finished, it's unlikely that it will be ready even for the over-eager Japanese market before late summer. Whether *Multi Racing Championship* will have stolen its thunder by then remains to be seen.

Hopefully the course map won't be quite as intrusive.



AMAZING RALLY FACT
The most successful British rally car was the humble Mini. Its short wheel-base, supreme manoeuverability and super-charged Cooper engine helped power it to three Monte Carlo Rally victories between 1964 and 1967.



GO! GO!



FIFA 64



FIFA 64
ELECTRONIC ARTS
Size: 64M | 4
Early April

Anything other than EA's *FIFA* series would have curled up and died after the critical panning its 1997 update received on the PlayStation. And yet, despite conceding the sort of defeat that West Ham consistently revel in, the game sailed to the top of the charts. Proof, then, if indeed any were needed, that whatever's said about EA's take on The Beautiful Game, minor setbacks like 60% scores don't really seem to matter when it comes to *FIFA* sales. And, of course, once the N64 has its feet firmly in place, *FIFA 64* is likely once again to guarantee a bumper set of results for EA. Hopefully this time there'll be some justification for its inevitable success.

The most exciting thing about this 64-bit rendition of *FIFA* is that it has been, supposedly, almost totally rewritten. Despite the game's once again utilising the silken shape of Newcastle love machine David Ginola, hardly anything remains of the anorexic PlayStation version. Instead, EA's Canadian connection has taken to the motion-captured polygonal players with a sharp stick, rejigging them and smoothing out their previously sharp polygonal edges, and injecting some speed into proceedings as well as resetting the previously disappointing camera angles. Also included is a new feature allowing players to view a separate part of the field while playing.

The *FIFA* licence once again allows EA the freedom to include Premiership sides as well as a huge database of foreign and international teams. The time spent converting the old 32-bit game into – hopefully – a much improved N64 version will also allow the programmers an opportunity to update these stats.

The game was originally scheduled for a March release, but it now seems more likely to appear sometime in late April. Sadly, a nigh-on finished version bandied about the N64 offices just prior to us going to press wasn't wholly encouraging – the 'stickiness' still remains, for example – but we'll be giving FIFA 64 a more thorough going over in the very next issue of this fine publication, pitting it against the superb *J-League Perfect Striker*.



Well, that's one way to keep the ball out of your end.

Come back! We didn't mean it about the PlayStation version…



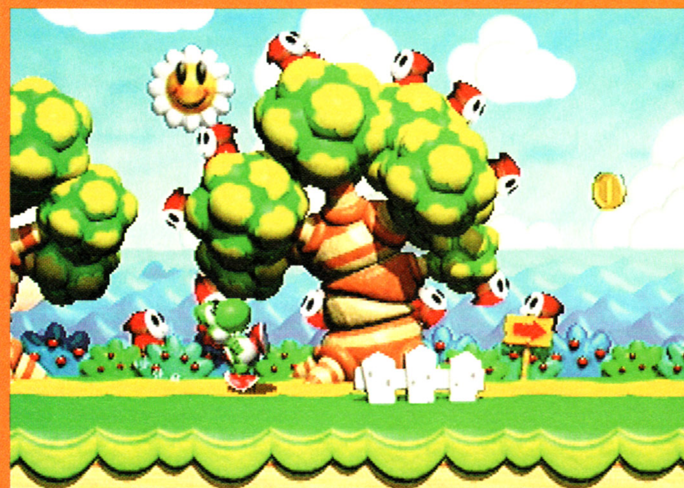
DYNAMITE SOCCER

J-League Dynamite Soccer
IMAGINEER
Size: TBA | 4
Release date TBA

Away from the *Perfect Striker/FIFA 64* battleground, little has been said of Imagineer's *Dynamite Soccer*. Out soon in Japan, it combines motion capture and *J-League* statistics in a similar fashion to Konami's title, but opts for chunkier characters, rather like the old SNES football sim, *Super Soccer 2*. Naturally, all manner of pre-match formations and the like have been included – A Good Thing, we think you'll agree – and there are screens of competitions to get your teeth into. *Dynamite Soccer* maybe doesn't look up to *Perfect Striker* standards, but it's likely to be good fun all the same. A European release may come through Ocean, but although when this might happen is hard to say.



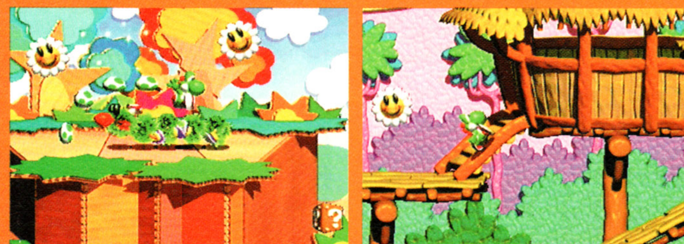
YOSHI'S ISLAND 64



Although it came late in the day for the SNES, *Yoshi's Island* provided a storming epitaph for Nintendo's 16-bit machine. Not, perhaps, since *Super Mario World* had Miyamoto and his pals produced such a masterpiece, combining a visual feast with frequent spurts of Edison-like invention. This N64 update, then, already finds itself weighed down by anticipation.

The decision to maintain the game's 2D roots came as something of a surprise to us but, looking at the game so far, Miyamoto is plainly making an effort to recreate and surpass the putty-like playability of the original. Early reports, pictures and video footage provide ample proof of its potential.

Naturally, considering the early stage it's at, Nintendo have thumped this with their hefty secrecy stamp. Judging by these pictures, though, it's not likely to disappoint in the graphical department. More will follow very, very soon…



More cartoon-like scenes pour from Miyamoto's head. The characters, the backgrounds… everything looks t'riffic.

CREATION

Mancunian mind-magicians Software Creations – already busy beavering away at 'copter sim *Blade and Barrel* – are also hard at work on this much-ignored multimedia package, which is being put toghether for the 64DD. Not so much a game as a beautified, matured version of Nintendo's okay-ish SNES colouring book, *Mario Paint, Creator* gives players the chance to build up their own 3D worlds by using the animation, graphical and musical programmes on offer.

The packages are simplified versions of those used by several of the companies developing for the N64, and are here used to re-paint 3D worlds, create animation, write music and improve existing 3D models. The idea sounds fascinating and, as well as showing off the machine's astounding visual capabilities, offers Joe Public the enviable chance to write for the N64.



Creator
NINTENDO/SOFTWARE CREATIONS
Size: TBA | 1
Release date TBA

SAN FRANCISCO RUSH

After the horrendously ropey *Cruis'n USA*, you'd think a decision to steer well clear of driving games would be top of Williams' agenda. But after Atari came up with an idea for a San Fran-based speed party, they simply couldn't help themselves and slapped a dollop of cash down for this Daytona-influenced racer. Eight players and high speeds are its current claim to fame. The fact that it includes a section set in the streets of the city – à la *Cruis'n* – probably doesn't induce quite so much excitement, however…

San Francisco Rush
WILLIAMS/MIDWAY
Size: TBA | TBA
Release date TBA

GO! GO!

GO GO!! TROUBLEMAKERS



With everyone else seemingly eager to exploit the Nintendo 64's 3D graphics capabilities, it might seem odd that Treasure are sticking with 2D for their platform shoot-'em-up, *Go! Go! Troublemakers*. But we can assume they know what they're doing, having previously been responsible for the excellent Sega games *Gunstar Heroes* and *Guardian Heroes*. And from what's been seen so far of *Troublemakers* it looks absolutely superb. (You'll be able to see some of it for yourself on The N64 Video.)

The advantage of using the Nintendo 64 to produce a 2D game is that, no longer having to worry about heaving huge polygonal objects around, our grey-skinned chum can produce some absolutely stunning sprites and backgrounds. Look at the pictures and the video and you'll see enormous baddies and complicatedly scrolling backgrounds the likes of which have never been seen on a console before. Miyamoto is finding he can do the same sort of thing with *Yoshi's Island 64*, so the Treasure boys are clearly onto something.

So what do you do, then, in *Troublemakers'* world of swirling backgrounds and hordes of fast-moving monsters? Well, it's a bit weird. You're a robotic house maid called Marina, who's found herself having to rescue her boss, Professor Gumbel, from some baddies. So off you set across the world of Nendoro, hopping and swinging through the levels. And the twist is that you've got no weapons, and must instead grab monsters and shake them until they drop their own weapons, and then use those.

Looking at Treasure's previous games, *Troublemakers* is bound to be packed with enormous explosions and amazing special effects, and, with a two-player mode thrown in as well, we count it amongst our most-looked-forward-to N64 games.

Go Go!! Troublemakers		
ENIX/TREASURE		
	Size: TBA	 2
Summer		







◁ *While Go Go!! is essentially 2D, there's plenty of 3D stuff going on in the backgrounds.*

Blimey. Here's something robotic housemaids don't tend to come across every day. ▷



SILICON VALLEY







△ *So far Silicon Valley is just some characters and some landscapes.*

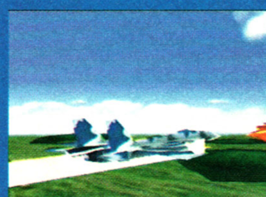
The second N64 game from Dundee's DMA, alongside *Body Harvest,* is a strange old fish. The visual style is more akin to *Mario 64* than anything, but the ideas behind the game are unmistakably original. Players take on the role of EVO, a robot who must assume the guises of various animals in order to complete certain tasks. Rabbits, frogs and puppies, as well as sundry other members of the animal kingdom, are given a run-out accompanied by a liberal dose of comedy: bears ride unicycles and birds have their feathers replaced by RAF wings.

N64 took a trip to sunny Scotland to see both DMA's projects, and, while *Silicon Valley* looked good, it was still in the very earliest stages of development. Their second game, *Body Harvest,* however, was more advanced and looked really rather tasty. We'll have more on that next month.

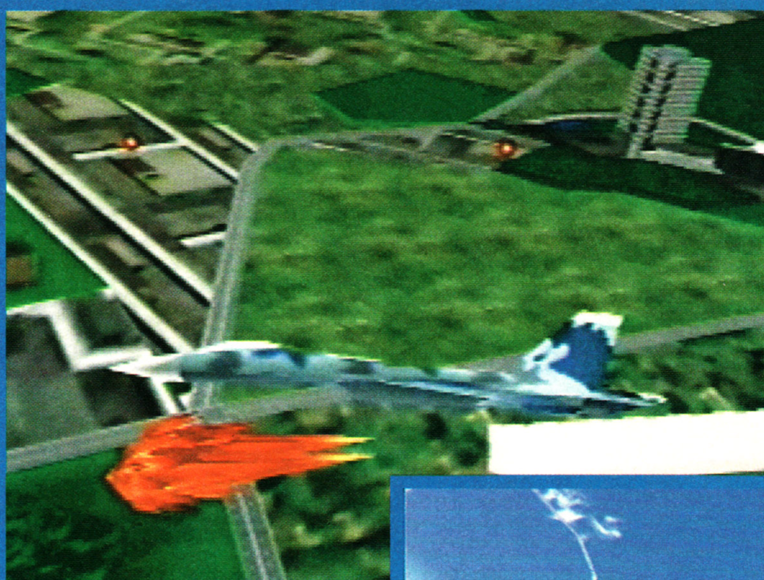
Silicon Valley		
DMA		
	Size: TBA	 TBA
Late 1997/early 1998		

SONIC WINGS ASSAULT

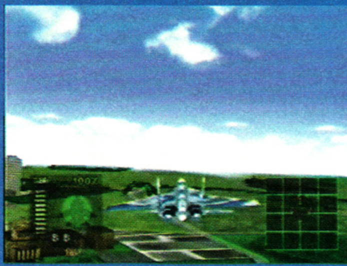
Sonic Wings Assault
VIDEO SYSTEM/PARADIGM
Size: TBA | 2
Summer







The Russian planes are, it's to be assumed, the baddies. Unless there's some late-'90s plot twist.



The radar screen looks intriguingly high-tech. There are close-up screens too.

A Sukhoi? Or a MiG? Our plane-spotting skills appear to have deserted us.



Coming from slightly obscure Japanese publisher Video System, resposible for SNES 'hits' like *Super F1 Grand Prix* and *Super Volley II*, *Sonic Wings Assault* doesn't initially appear to have much to recommend it. But how about this: it's actually being put together by Paradigm, the people behind *Pilotwings 64*. And, more to the point, it looks great!

It's an air combat game, where you pick from a number of pilots and a number of planes and then head off to, well, erm, 'kick some butt'. The pictures that've been released so far show F-14s doing battle with MiGs and Sukhois, and it all looks pretty authentic, although presumably the emphasis is on farm-buying fun rather than PC-style simulation. The pictures also show buildings that can be flown between, although not, sadly, canyons. They're hopefully still to come. There's a two-player mode, apparently, too.

Something akin to MicroProse's *Top Gun* game on the PC, but with good graphics, would be ideal when *Sonic Wings Assault* appears in Japan in the summer. No-one's signed the game up for a release in the US or Europe yet, but, given Video System's Western-based credentials, this is only a matter of time.

WILD CHOPPERS

After the highly disappointing *St Andrew's Golf*, Seta look likely to recover some credibility with their second N64 title, *Wild Choppers*. Despite lurking mysteriously beneath the traditional Japanese blanket of secrecy, *Wild Choppers* looks to be an arcade helicopter game with the accent more on copious frolicking with rotors and missiles than on realism and accuracy.

Wild Choppers uses both the D-pad and the analogue stick to manoeuvre the 'copter in its three-act set-up, while the action recalls EA's *Strike* series with installations, armoured vehicles and soldiers to be blown up. However, dangers come in the form of limited firepower, time limits and a frighteningly extensive enemy force.

The Japanese version of *Choppers* is due in March, but no-one's signed it for Europe yet.



Wild Choppers
SETA
Size: TBA | TBA
March



BLADE AND BARREL

Seeping from the unfathomably productive loins of Blighty boys Software Creations comes the N64's second helicopter sim, in the shape of *Blade and Barrel*. A four-player air and ground-based extravaganza, *B&B* will give players the chance to take out both human and alien forces as well as any amount of architecture, with the game being set across industrial, desert and urban sprawls.

There are apparently as many as 20 levels to sink your teeth into, with objectives amounting to little more than out-and-out destruction. Weapons are given a *Turok*-style injection of steel, with lorry-loads of power-ups, upgrades and repairs also available for public consumption. However, the addition of some four-way rambling will be the most mouth-watering prospect, with *Blade and Barrel's* two-against-two set-up likely to induce healthy amounts of bad language. Graphically it's not going to set the world alight, but it's positively dripping with potential.



Blade and Barrel
KEMCO/SOFTWARE CREATIONS
Size: TBA | 4
TBA

GO! GO!



In a bizarre 'coals to Newcastle' type situation Robotech will be released in Japan under one of its original guises – Super Dimensional Fortress Macross.

Will it really be as intense as this?

ROBOTECH: CRYSTAL DREAMS

Considering that *Robotech* is coming from the same company who decided *Vanna White's Wheel of Fortune* would make a good SNES game, you'd be forgiven for expecting Gametek's N64 debut to be something slightly less than pleasant. Yet, recent screenshots emanating from *Crystal Dreams'* in-house development team dare suggest otherwise.

A sweeping robot-led space-blaster, *Robotech* takes its cue from the infamous American coupling of three unconnected Japanese anime series', and pits you, as a Veritech fighter, against the might of the Ebolian and Zentraedi armies. The plot, however, is anything but straightforward as it evolves depending on what course you take through the game. So in theory each player could end up celebrating the glories of a completely different ending.

Graphically, *Crystal Dreams* has a tasty mechanical sheen, with enemy robots and your own space craft able to change in size and shape at will. The musical score is also likely to impress, its 'total interactivity' allowing you freedom to hear what you like, when you like. *Crystal Dreams'* all sounds impressive enough, but, due to Gametek's disturbing policy of secrecy, little or nothing has been seen of Robotech in action. Until such time as things go public, the jury, as they say, is firmly out...

Robotech: Crystal Dreams
GAMETEK
 **Size: TBA** | **TBA**
Summer

DARK RIFT



Looks pretty nifty, huh? And is that a light saber that blue chap's holding?

Emanating from the Vic Tokai stable, whose gaming CV doesn't include any SNES or Game Boy mega-hits, *Dark Rift* is likely to be the N64's very next beat-'em up, scheduled for an early spring release. The whole shebang actually sounds highly promising, with all the fighters being pieced together via the magic of advanced 3D motion capture and the thrust of the game being built around some particularly solid foundations, including projectile attacks, combos, side-steps and eight playable characters. Reportedly, Nintendo were very impressed with the versions they saw and, although *Dark Rift* is likely to struggle against the big names (even though they're patently whiffy), it's certain to put Vic Tokai's name on the N64 map.

DUAL HEROES

ON THE N64 VIDEO



Dark Rift

VIC TOKAI

 Size: TBA | 2

TBA



Our combatants appear to have arrived in some sort of jungle here, their differences still unresolved.



And still they're at each other's throats. Let's hope that truck in the background doesn't accidentally get blown up, eh?

Dual Heroes

HUDSONSOFT

 Size: TBA | 2

TBA

With the current selection of N64 beat-'em ups amounting to little more than uninspired conversions, the need for a solid, original fighter on the format is obvious. And with *Dual Heroes,* HudsonSoft may have the answer. Not only is the game N64-specific but, unlike *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* and *Killer Instinct Gold,* it's completely 3D. Early versions only feature two characters – Zen and Gai – both of whom appear to be extras from the Power Rangers. But the addition of an interesting new feature called Virtual Gaming should be enough to gain the game some early notoriety. Basically, this introduces a series of computer-controlled players into the game – which the human player can select to play against – all of whom have their favourite fighters and individual moves and strategies. The end result is a more complex set of opponents and supposedly never-before-experienced AI. Early screenshots suggest a liberal spadeful of promise, and with *Bomberman 64* also on the cards for later in the year, 1997 looks like it could be a busy twelve months for HudsonSoft.

And more...

One of the most original and entertaining multi-player games on the Super Nintendo (and, indeed, most other games formats) is *Super Bomberman*, in which you and your chums run around a maze attempting to blow each other up with bombs. We're therefore looking forward eagerly to *Bomberman 64,* which Hudson are currently beavering away on. It's rumoured to be in 3D, intriguingly. If there are only two of you, however, *ClayFighter 63 1/3* would be just as suitable. It's the N64 successor to Interplay's 'humourous' SNES beat-'em-ups, and will feature the same 2D animation but against 3D backgrounds. It's virtually finished, and ought to be out in the UK in around June. Even more finished is Epoch's quirkily Japanese *Doraemon,* which also follows on from some SNES games, and which we ought to be reviewing next month. That wasn't much cop, but the N64 version is interesting because it's the first third-party game to attempt to create a *Mario-64*-style 3D world. As is, coincidentally, Konami's superb-looking *Ganbare Goemon 5*. Another SNES sequel, it looks streets ahead of its already-excellent SNES forebears (known in the West as *Legend of the Mystical Ninja*), with incredible 3D graphics and the promise of masses to explore and experiment with. It's scheduled for 'sometime this year'. Before that, our chums at Konami will be releasing *Power Pro Baseball 4,* their rival to Imagineer's reviewed-this-month *Pro King Baseball*. Konami's players are even cuter than Imagineer's, with no legs at all, and Konami promise their game will be much better. Konami are also known to be working on three or four other games, and, although they haven't released details, it doesn't take Mystic Meg to guess that they'll be based on previous successful Konami games like *Castlevania, Contra, Gradius* and *Twinbee*. When these are confirmed, they'll be some of the most keenly-awaited games in the N64 pipeline, especially in the light of the PlayStation's stunning *Castlevania* game. The other big Japanese developer who's yet to make any definite N64 announcement is Capcom, the people behind *Street Fighter II*. They are known to be working on some

GO! GO!





Wherefore art thou, RPGs? On the way, thank goodness, with Imagineer's Crystal Stories nearly finished and Nintendo's Mother 3 gathering pace.

In Japan and, you may be surprised to learn, America as well, RPGs rule the roost. Nintendo's *Zelda* games, Square's *Final Fantasy* series and Enix's *Dragon Quest* saga are huge, and the latest *Final Fantasy* game, *FFVII,* sold almost as many copies in Japan as there are PlayStations, with the machine selling out across the country as gamers raised on the SNES series found they had to buy new hardware to satisfy their continuing obsession.

So how many N64 RPGs are there? Er, none. *Zelda's* looking great, of course, and so's Konami's *Ganbare Goemon 5.* But both those are action RPGs, and neither's ready yet in any case. As well as them, the N64 needs something with lots of little numbers and menus and, while Square and Enix haven't actually said they won't be supporting the N64 with RPGs, they haven't made any positive announcements yet, and seem to be waiting to see what's possible with the new machine and its cart and 64DD formats before committing themselves.

Luckily, however, not everyone's being so standoffish...

MOTHER 3

Mother 3		
NINTENDO/HAL		
Japan	Size: TBA	1
Late 1997/early 1998		

Hugely popular in Japan, Nintendo's bizarre *Mother* series actually stems from just one man: Shigesato Ito. He's something of a celebrity in his home country and even turned up in adverts for *Mother 2.* But converting the world of *Mother* into 3D for his new N64 game seems to have proved to be too much for Ito and his small APE team to handle, so he's enlisted the help of HAL Laboratories to piece things together.





And the results, so far, look stunning, with familiar characters like Ness, Jeff, Giant Inobaba and Carby looking great in their new 3D clothes, and, at the same time, just as weird and Charlie-Brown-esque as before.

Gone is the smalltown America theme of *Mother 2.* Everything's taken on a more typical fantasy theme. Nevertheless, the villages and surroundings are incredibly detailed, with a graphical style all of their own.

Mother 3 is attracting particular interest, though, because it's one of the first officially-announced 64DD games, and could well be one of the N64 disc drive's launch titles now that *Zelda's* been brought forward. Nintendo haven't yet said what form *Mother 3's* 64DD-ness will take. But it's reasonable to assume that it'll take on some sort of customisable aspect, using the writable bit of the 64DD to allow the world to evolve as you play. Characters will be able to develop, for example, and might even keep track of conversations you've had with them, so they don't keep repeating themselves.

The first NES *Mother* game was Japanese only, but the SNES-based sequel made it over to America as Earthbound where it met with great success. Nintendo haven't yet said whether *Mother 3* will be heading Westwards, but we'll bet a ¥100 coin on it, see if we don't.



The final cast of Mother 3 have yet to be decided so chances are some of this motley crew won't make it into the final game.



A more action-orientated slant to Mother 3 perhaps?

CRYSTAL STORIES





Crystal Stories		
IMAGINEER		
Japan	Size: TBA	1
Summer		

Looking similar in the pictures to *Zelda, Crystal Stories* (or *Holy Magic Century Eltale* if you prefer the Japanese moniker – we do) will, we reckon, take a more traditional approach to RPGing beneath its 3D polygons. Its characters and locations certainly seem typical of a thousand SNES role players.

Things fly off the handle a bit with religion, though, which in Imagineer's world revolves around the four elements: earth, wind, fire and water, along with a fifth, 'ethereal' element. The elements are represented in *Crystal Stories* by Spirits, and, as a small boy setting off from Popeland to find some swords to destroy Larva and his band of Evils, you must become a Spirit Handler and use the Spirits to aid you.

You won't be alone in your quest, luckily. Backing you up are a 13-year-old Princess, Nina and Cozi, a teenage pirate.

Imagineer reckon it'll take about 40 hours to play all the way through and, more importantly, that it's nearly ready for release. In fact, *Crystal Stories* ought to be out in Japan this summer.

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

Mission: Impossible	
OCEAN	
Size: TBA	TBA
June	

Although little has been seen of Ocean's take on the adrenaline-heavy Tom Cruise-helmer up until now, things are likely to start happening soon, with the game pencilled in for the summer, and our very own James visiting Ocean's development team in San Jose next month. Preliminary talk, however, is of a highly promising game with the player taking on the role of Ethan Hunt, the IMF agent of the film, who's sent on a mission which backfires and has him accused of being a killer.

The game is split into six sections – each a totally separate mission – with Ethan trying to prove his innocence while avoiding the army of Impossible Mission Force agents sent to kill him. The game reportedly has some stunningly accurate AI, with enemies programmed to 'think', meaning that theoretically no two characters have the same responses or movement patterns.

Ocean have been quick to discard the *'Doom'* label *Mission: Impossible* has earned, instead insisting the game relies more heavily on social interaction elements. And the pictures certainly look far more detailed than any version of *Doom* we've ever seen, and packed with the sort of computer-related tomfoolery that formed the guts of the film.

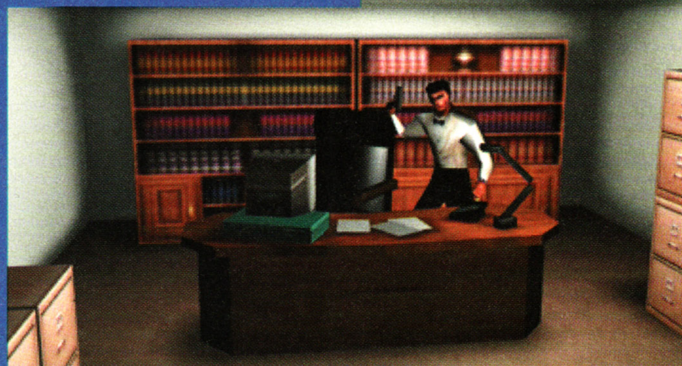
Certainly, *Mission: Impossible* is shaping up superbly. We'll have loads more on it next month, when James gets back.



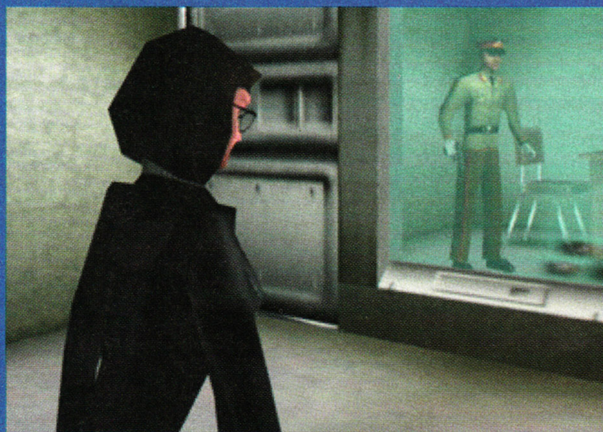
He looks more like an Italian waiter than Tom Cruise, if you ask us. Only 16 minutes 45 seconds to go, though, so he'd better hurry up.



This room closely resembles our intensive games testing room.



Young ruffians had vandalised the exhibits at Sea World again.



When we showed Jonathan this picture, a tear came to his eye. Then he sent us back to work.

Oh dear. Less than 9 minutes to go, and our waiter friend has disappeared altogether.



games, though, and, again, it's easy enough to guess what some of them might be: a *Street Fighter* no doubt, a *Mega Man* game, and a 3D version of *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*. And then, of course, there's Nintendo themselves. Shigeru Miyamoto, Nintendo's star producer, is known to be working on four or five new N64 games, including *Yoshi's Island 64*, *Jungle Emperor Leo* (an original game based on a Japanese cartoon series about a lion) and *Super Mario RPG 2*. He might also be thinking about *F-Zero 64*, a sequel to the much-loved SNES racing game, which could be a real *Wipeout* beater. *Kirby's Air Ride*, meanwhile, which is shown on our free video this month, is thought to have been taken back to the drawing board, but *Tetrisphere* is back on course after a shaky couple of months. Shigs is also keeping a close eye on a number of third-party developments for Nintendo, including *Creator*, a 64DD version of the SNES's *Mario Paint*, a new *Sim City* game, and, we'll wager, *Donkey Kong Country 64*. Rare, *Donkey Kong's* makers, are also working on *GoldenEye 007*. Apparently Bond's adversaries react diffently depending on where you shoot them, dropping their guns if you hit them in the arm, or falling over if their legs are run through. Good stuff. And then, over is the US, by far the most prolific producers of N64 games are Williams/Midway, who've so far given us *Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey* and *Cruis'n USA*. They've got a record-breakingly long list of titles in development, including *Doom 64* and *Final Doom II*; *Centipede X*, *Robotron X* and *Joust* (updated versions of classic arcade games – *Robotron X* is already out on the PC, and a touch disappointing); *Mace: The Dark Age* (a great-looking 3D beat-'em-up being developed with Atari); *Mortal Kombat 4* (groan); *Mortal Kombat Mythology* (an RPG, bizarrely, starring Sub-Zero); *Quake 64* (based on the top-notch PC game); *War Gods* (another beat-'em-up); and *Attack!* and *Bio Freaks*, about which they've revealed nothing. We're unable to determine when any of these might be released in the UK, though, as GT (Midway's European distributor) never seem to answer their phone. Finally, while we're in America: Are Westwood bringing *Command & Conquer* to the N64? Or not? They're not saying, the rogues, but are rumoured to be talking to Nintendo about becoming Nintendo licencees...

GO! GO!





ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest information on every Nintendo 64 game currently in development world-wide, updated monthly.

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	GAME TYPE	JAPAN	US	UK
Attack!	Midway	–	–	TBA	TBA
Biofreaks	Midway	–	–	TBA	TBA
Blade and Barrel	Kemco	shoot-'em-up	Mar	–	–
Blast Corps	Nintendo/Rare	shoot-'em-up	Mar	Apr	August
Body Harvest	Nintendo	–	TBA	TBA	–
Bomberman 64	Hudson	arcade	Mar	–	–
Buggy Boogie	Nintendo/Angel	racing	wint 97	TBA	–
Cavalry Battle 3000	JSS	racing	Nov	–	–
Centipede X	Midway	shoot-'em-up	–	TBA	TBA
Chameleon Twist	Nihon	platform	TBA	–	–
ClayFighter 63 1/3	Interplay	beat-'em-up	–	June	TBA
Creator	Nintendo/SC	multi-media	TBA	–	–
Cu-On-Pa	T&E	puzzle	Dec	–	–
Dark Rift	Vic Tokai	beat-'em-up	10 May	–	–
Dead Ahead	Optical	–	TBA	–	–
Doom 64	GT	shoot-'em-up	–	April 4	TBA
Doraemon	Epoch	adventure	TBA	–	–
Dual Heroes	Hudson	beat-'em-up	TBA	–	–
Duke Nukem 3D	GT/SC	shoot-'em-up	–	TBA	–
Extreme G	Acclaim	–	–	TBA	TBA
F-Zero 64	Nintendo	racing	TBA	TBA	–
Final Round 64	Konami	golf sim	TBA	–	–
Frank Thomas Baseball	Acclaim/Iguana	baseball sim	TBA	–	–
Freak Boy	Virgin	action	TBA	TBA	–
Ganbare Goemon 5	Konami	adventure	TBA	–	–
Go! Go! Trouble Makers	Enix	–	TBA	–	–
GoldenEye 007	Nintendo/Rare	action	TBA	Mid 97	TBA
Golf	Nintendo	golf sim	TBA	TBA	–
Hexen 64	GT	shoot-'em-up	–	TBA	–
Holy Magic Century Eltale	Imagineer	–	TBA	–	–
Honkaku Yonin Uchi Mah Jong	Video Sys.	board game	TBA	–	–
Human Grand Prix	Human	racing	28 Mar	–	–
Human Wrestling	Human	wrestling sim	March	–	–
Ikazuchi no Goto Ku	Seta	Chinese chess	TBA	–	–
J-League Dynamite Soccer	Imagineer	football sim	Feb	–	–
J-League Live 64/FIFA 97	EA	football sim	April	April	April
Joust X	Midway	arcade	–	late 97	TBA
Jungle Emperor Leo	Nintendo	–	early 98	–	–
Jurassic Park 2	Dreamworks	–	–	TBA	–
Ken Griffey Jr Baseball	Nintendo	baseball sim	–	TBA	–
Kindaichi Shonen no Jikenbo	Hudson	–	TBA	–	–
Kirby's Air Ride	Nintendo	–	TBA	TBA	–
Lamborghini 64	Titus	racing	TBA	TBA	–
Legend of Zelda 64	Nintendo	–	Late 97	Late 97	TBA

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	GAME TYPE	JAPAN	US	UK
Loderunner 64	Bandai	–	TBA	–	–
Mace: The Dark Age	Atari	beat-'em-up	TBA	–	–
Mah Jong 64*	Koei	board game	TBA	–	–
Maho Seiki Eruteiri	Imagineer	RPG	TBA	–	–
Mario Kart 64	Nintendo	racing	out	out	June
Mission: Impossible	Ocean	action	TBA		TBA
Morita Shogi*	Seta	–	TBA	–	–
Mother 3	Nintendo	–	Late 97	–	–
Multi-Racing Championship	Imagineer	racing	April	–	TBA
Namco Baseball	Namco	baseball sim	TBA	–	–
Pebble Beach Golf Links	T&E	golf sim	TBA	–	–
Power League 64*	Hudson	baseball sim	TBA	–	–
Power Pro Baseball 4	Konami	baseball sim	14 Mar	–	–
Quake 64	GT	shoot-'em-up	–	late '97	TBA
Rebel Moon Rising	Midway	–	TBA	TBA	TBA
Rev Limit	Seta	racing	Mar	–	–
Robotech: Crystal Dreams	Gametek	shoot-'em-up	1 July	–	TBA
Robotron X	Williams	arcade	15 May	–	–
Saikyo Habu Shogi	Seta	–	TBA	–	–
San Francisco Rush	Midway	racing	–	TBA	–
Silicon Valley	BMG	action/RPG	TBA	–	TBA
Soccer 64*	Hudson	football sim	TBA	–	–
Star Fox 64	Nintendo	shoot-'em-up	27 April	23 June	autumn
Super Mario RPG 2	Nintendo	–	TBA	TBA	TBA
Super Real Island	Seta	–	May	–	–
Super Robot Spirits	Banpresto	–	1997	–	–
Tetrisphere	H20	puzzle	Apr	Apr	–
Top Gear Rally	Kemco/Boss	racing	TBA	TBA	–
Turok: Dinosaur Hunter	Acclaim	–	April	out	out
Ultimate Racer	Acclaim	racing	–	TBA	TBA
Ultra Combat	GT/SC	–	–	TBA	–
Ultra Descent	Interplay	shoot-'em-up	–	TBA	TBA
VR Baseball	Interplay	baseball sim	–	TBA	–
VR Golf	Interplay	golf sim	–	TBA	–
War Gods	Williams–		15 Jun	–	TBA
Wave Race 64	Nitnendo	racing	out	out	April
Wet Corpse	Vic Tokai	–	TBA	–	–
Wild Choppers	Seta	shoot-'em-up	March	–	–
XSW-1	Video System	–	TBA	–	–
Yoshi's Island 64	Nintendo	action	TBA	TBA	TBA
3-D Shooting*	Video Systems	–	TBA	–	–
64 Ozumo	Bottom Up	sumo wrestling	TBA	–	–

* working title

Not many UK releases announced yet, you'll notice. Don't worry – loads of games are on the way. It's just that many publishers are waiting till there are plenty of N64s in the country before deciding upon definite release dates.

N64

Eager Waiting

The Nintendo 64 games we're most looking forward to getting our damp hands on.

1. **The Legend of Zelda 64** Nintendo — Release TBA
2. **Starfox 64** Nintendo — August (April in Japan)
3. **Super Mario RPG 2** Nintendo — Release TBA
4. **Go Go!! Troublemakers** Enix/Treasure — Release TBA
5. **Ganbare Goemon 5: Dance of the Neo Momoyama Shogunate** Konami — Release TBA
6. **Mother 3** Nintendo — Release TBA
7. **Blast Corps** Nintendo — August (March in Japan)
8. **Yoshi's Island 64** Nintendo — Late summer
9. **International Superstar Soccer 64** Konami — June
10. **Doom 64** GT — Release TBA (April in the US)

TOP 5 IMPORT SALES

Which're the best-selling American and Japanese games in the UK, then?

1. **Turok: Dinosaur Hunter**
2. **J-League Perfect Striker**
3. **Mario Kart 64**
4. **Shadows of the Empire**
5. **Wave Race 64**

Monitored by Project K.

REVIEWED, RATED... AND COMPLETED!

N64 MAGAZINE

ARENA

Every month, N64 Magazine throws all the latest Nintendo 64 games into the Arena and reviews them to within an inch of their lives. We cover all official UK releases and then, in the second half of our reviews section, the best from Japan and America. You'll find our reviews bursting with information and tips. You'll find they're scored ruthlessly, with only games that're actually worth buying achieving high scores. Most importantly of all, before we award our Star Game medal, we play the game to completion to ensure it's truly superb in every conceivable way.

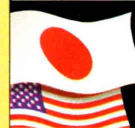
SUPER MARIO 64





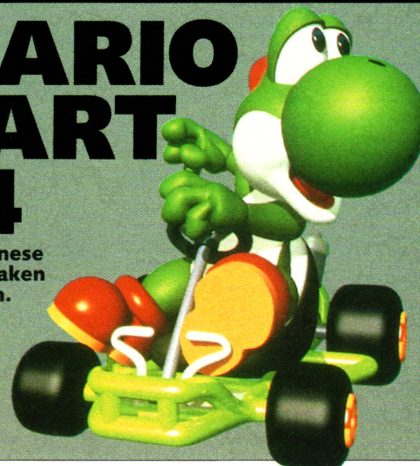
Page after page on this incredible game. We've played it from start to finish.

32



IMPORT

MARIO KART 64



The Japanese version taken for a spin.

66



TUROK DINOSAUR HUNTER

58

Make the best use of Turok's devastating array of weaponry.



SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

46

A brilliant Star Wars game. Some bits are better than others, though – let Yoda guide you through.



PILOTWINGS 64

52

Only the Nintendo 64 could recreate flying this convincingly.

ARENA

Most N64 games tend to appear in Japan and America before they arrive in Europe. We track them down, play them thoroughly and review them immediately, to ensure our readers are fully informed at all times. We'll then also review the UK versions as soon as they become available.

PLAYING IMPORT GAMES

Japanese and American games can only be obtained through specialist importers, and won't work on unmodified UK N64s. To play them you'll either need a Japanese or American machine or have to wait for a Universal Adaptor. We'll keep you posted on this special cart and review it as soon as it's out.

N64 MAGAZINE GUIDE TO SCORING

We play all new Nintendo 64 games thoroughly and, if they're really great, we'll play them through to the end before arriving at a verdict. Our scores are considered carefully, taking into account the high cost of Nintendo games and the incredible capabilities of the N64. Here's how it works:

85% and above



N64 Magazine only awards the most superb games scores of 85% or above. We complete them to make sure they stay great all the way through and if they do, give them our Star Game award. Games scoring this highly are great to play and show-off the N64 fully.

84%-70%

Because such high standards have been set by the likes of *Super Mario 64* and *Mario Kart 64*, many otherwise excellent games struggle to match them. While they may still be well worth buying and playing, **N64** scores them strictly.

69%-50%

An irksomely unsatisfying area of the scale, containing games that are merely competent. They'll be playable and moderately entertaining but no more, probably because their developers have failed to grasp what the N64 is all about.

49%-20%

Let scores of less than 50% be a warning to you. These games really are no fun, and do our N64s a disservice.

19%-0%

We hope never to have to explore this scoring extreme, but will exercise it fearlessly if necessary.

THOSE CATEGORIES EXPLAINED

The N64 can produce graphics undreamt of before its arrival, and our 'Visuals' category takes this into account.	9 VISUALS
Has it got good noises in? And is the music good? Or just annoying? These things matter, they really do.	9 SOUNDS
How well does the game make use of the N64's amazing hardware? A *Mario*-beater? Or just a PlayStation port?	9 MASTERY
It may look great, and sound brilliant, but will you finish it in five minutes and never want to play it again?	9 LIFESPAN
And the big mark at the end is essentially a measure of how much fun you're likely to get out of the game.	VERDICT

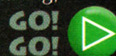
Not since Julius Caesar has one little Italian had so much impact on the world...

SUPER



The difference between a video game and a great video game, Oscar Wilde* once said, is that the former is finished to schedule, while the latter is finished when it's finished.

We've endured a painfully long wait for the N64, and if you're in such a mind then you could blame some of the delays on this fellow. It's no secret that Shigeru Miyamoto, Nintendo's head of game design and Mario's Dad, asked for more time to work on the console's launch title. It was a good call, despite our growing doubts, and when you see what he and his team have achieved as a consequence you'll forgive the decision instantly. Yes, *Super Mario 64* really is that breathtaking, and we'd like to show you why...



* No relation.





Super Mario 64			
NINTENDO			
(UK flag)	64M	(controller)	1
~~Controller Pak back-up~~	On cartridge back-up	Out now	
£59.95			

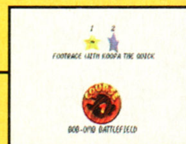
MARIO 64



Here's how it works

Rather than tell you the final score before the match starts and spoil some of your fun with *Mario 64*, we'll reserve our probing and comprehensive 120 star guide until next month. Instead, we've gone one better. Scattered throughout these pages are tips, stunts and techniques to actually improve your prowess and help you to explore the gameworld yourself. At the same time, we'll be giving those of you unlucky enough yet to get hold of an N64 a flavour of what it is to actually play the game.

COURSES

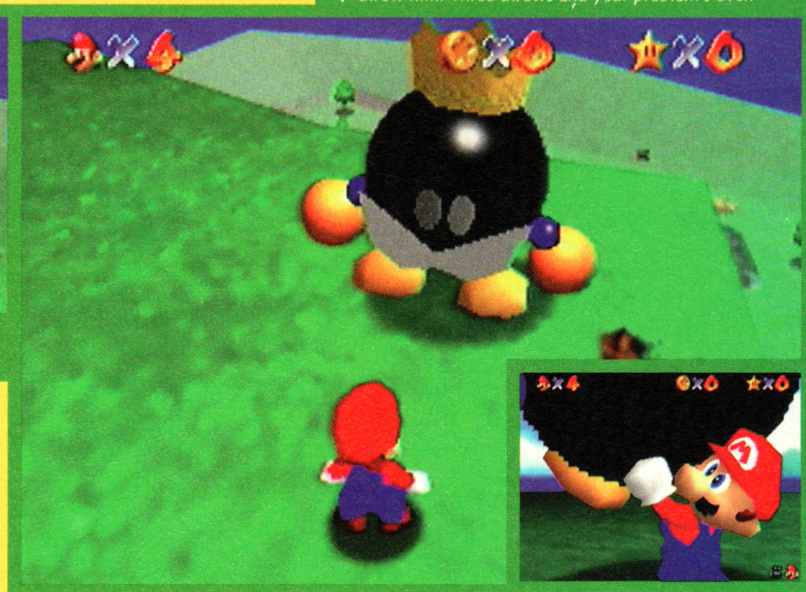


Before each course begins, you'll see a white screen showing the stars obtained on the current save file. Sometimes the course environment changes according to what you've achieved, so it's important to know that you can re-select those conditions before proceeding. Move left and right on the stick here and the game lets you choose which star to go for, up to the greatest Star you've gained. This lets you re-race Koopa the Quick for a better time, for instance, or raise the shipwreck after perfecting Jolly Roger Bay. (The game defaults to Star 1 if you enter a course after its completion.)

Course 1 BOB-OMB'S BATTLEFIELD



A long shot-shows the Bomb King on top of his mountain.



Ah-ha, it's the Bomb King. He's not too tricky to deal with, just run around the back of him, pick him up and throw him. Three throws and your problem's over.

The world beyond the first picture presents a fairly gentle challenge to ease you into *Mario's* new-found 3D existence. Even a novice punch directed at a pink bomb merely results in some light-hearted banter. Your first task? To scale that distant plateau, from which the Bomb King is shelling the surroundings with water bombs.

Although you're free to wander anywhere in these rocky grasslands, the discovery of ramps, gates, see-saw bridges and a giant Chain Chomp guarding a path hints at a direction somebody doesn't want you to take. Even when you do find the base of the plateau, your jaunt up the winding mountain track is beset by the all-squishing might of enormous unstoppable cannonballs that regularly steamroller through. But wait – exploring a small niche that appeared to be their source, you shimmer and reappear in an identical crevice near the summit. A warp point! On mental paper, write a brief memo to yourself and file it for later.

Weighty as he looks, the Bomb King himself is no match for a competent player. His attack is to pick you up and throw you over the side, and it should give you a few ideas. Run around behind him and you can pick him up with the B button (be careful not to keep running so hard on the stick that you dive forward into his grasp), whereupon another press of B throws him to the ground. Needless to say, you'll try throwing him over the edge. Try again. After three throws the King surrenders his Power Star – your first measurable victory – and you may choose to explore other courses in the rest of the castle. It might even seem a bit easy, but that's just to get you acquainted with the correct boss-slaying tactics.

CHEEKY CHAPPY

The very first thing you actually see when you switch on your Nintendo 64 is the beaming head of Mazza himself. Looks a bit smug, doesn't he? You'd better press A to summon the magical Glove Cursor of Humility. With this you can pinch at his jowls or pull on his tash until he resembles a passport photo by Salvador Dali. Hold down R to make his expression stick 'with the wind changing', as supernature-fearing elder relatives are prone to threaten, then zoom and spin him with the C buttons for a spot of fun. Plastic, elastic, iconoclastic.









SHELL SURF





When you jump on one of those Koopa Troopers you'll squeeze him from his shell in traditional *Mario* fashion. The twist comes when you jump on the shell for a second time and scoot away on a trail of sparks before the evicted Koopa – now down to his embarrassingly pink smalls – can dive back in.

The Koopa Shell will carry you unharmed over dangerous surfaces like lava and quicksand, mowing down small enemies in your path and upsetting bigger ones. Push in the direction of travel to accelerate, thus building up the momentum to tackle steep slopes. The shell lasts until you run into a wall or deliberately terminate it by pressing the Z trigger, so be ready with small jumps to clear steps and avoid ledges.



◁ Jostling like a supercharged tractor, Koopa is soon cheating on the slopes

▽ If you cheat in return, can you beat our 'not bad' time of 41.7 seconds?





Upon your return, you'll spot a few differences. The pink bomb congratulates you, the cannons can now be activated – oh, and there's a Koopa Troopa the size of a transit van. Tuesdays, eh?

His challenge is to race you to the top of the plateau, where you defeated the Bomb King. When you accept and the firing pistol cracks, you might be disappointed by his fabled shell-bearing pace. But just when you imagine yourself in a supposed lead, you look back to catch sight of him slyly chugging up a sheer slope that's just too slippery for Mario's boots. Cheat!

Of course, you're prepared to overlook his behaviour on the grounds that it permits a shortcut of your own. By stepping into that niche on the mountain track, you can warp past him and touch the finishing post with enough spare time to sit back and watch him puffing his way to a miserable second place. Notch up Power Star number two, eh? By now you should feel you're getting the hang of it all, even if you do still slip off narrow platforms like a berk on occasion. But take the time to explore and experiment with *SM64*, because you'll discover easy solutions to tasks that once had you struggling and pad-bashing.

N64 STUNT

Bomb-baiting is one of many idle side-pursuits that you invent, rather than discover, thanks to Nintendo's attentive design touches and your freedom to play around. When a Bob-Omb sees Mario approach, he lights his fuse and closes in at high speed. In this state, it's dangerous for the Bob-Omb to come into contact with others. So with one bomb in pursuit, the sport is to run straight past another one and taunt him into lighting-up too. Now scarper in the direction that draws the two bombs together behind you, hold your ears and wait for your wickedly earned coins to roll by...



Shells found beneath the waves can be grabbed with the B button. Functioning as scuba units, they last just long enough to get you to the surface in a hurry. Some other things to bear in mind are...

- You'll inevitably lose steam on some of the sharper inclines, but the technique for maintaining impetus is to keep jumping and use bunny-hops to tackle the last stretch. Some areas in *Super Mario 64* can only be reached with a Koopa Shell and this trick.
- Until you reach Course 13, Huge Land, you'd best sit on this. Surf from the beach to the cannon, turn left and jump across to the the central island. Head straight on, jump again and you'll hit a thermal updraft. You can float here like the Silver Surfer or ride the gust back and forth until you come a cropper.

TV EYE

To truly grasp *Mario 64's* control mechanisms, you have to understand the workings of the viewpoint. The picture you see is provided by the Lakitu-Cam, a small cameraman on a cloud who follows Mario throughout the game and always keeps those weathered dungarees firmly in the public eye. What you do with the analogue stick is entirely relative to what you see on screen (see below).

Push the stick up and right, Mario turns that way and marches on. ▷



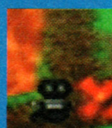






◁ *'Down' still moves him forward, but into camera. No, get back!*

Now, although he always tries to get the best shot of Mario in action, Lakitu is just as readily inhibited by walls and obstacles. There would be no room for him to get a side-on view of Mario walking down a narrow corridor, for instance, so he'd have to sit directly behind or get pushed ahead. And since he can't always second-guess what you're trying to do, it's occasionally helpful to re-position him yourself using R and the C buttons – thus turning a difficult stick angle into something you find comfy. Mastery of the game lies in being able to simultaneously control both Mario and, intuitively, Lakitu.



That icon in the lower right corner indicates your Lakitu-Cam set-up. Cycle between modes with R and a game pause, then use the C buttons to find new angles. Experiment with these as early as possible, and then constantly for ever more. Without fail. Yes.

Lakitu-Cam gives you the more objective viewpoint, as befits the notion of a higher entity following you on a cloud. Press the Bottom C to pull back for a wider panoramic, or Left/Right C for a profile shot.





Mario-Cam means Lakitu stays directly behind Mario's shoulder looking forward, the closest you'll get to first-person perspective. Handy for negotiating narrow gangplanks, because pushing forward will now actually move you straight forward.

A cross or 'camera lock' tells Lakitu to hold position while R is held. Now Mario can nip off to the bushes, or run far away until he's little more than a dot. Finally, release R for a video game head rush.





Press Top C for the head-mounted 'Wobblycam' and Mario is frozen to the spot while the joystick precisely directs his gaze in any direction. This is ideal for looking down vertiginous drops or scanning the walls for high-up features.

GO! GO! ▷



CASTLES

Start a new game file and this is the scene that greets you. The Princess's Castle is really the next-gen equivalent of a map screen, the hub from which you access all other parts of the game and to which you return after losing a life. In typical Nintendo fashion you're given a tantalising glimpse of what awaits – locked doors, steps that lead nowhere, a mysteriously empty garden – but can only gain access to the Castle's restricted areas by collecting the requisite number of Power Stars.

Super Mario 64 is divided into 15 multi-faceted worlds or 'Courses', variously reached by diving down holes or jumping into Bowser's paintings. Every one of these Courses holds six stars (plus a bonus seventh awarded for collecting coins), with a scattering of secret stars bringing the total to 120. You can beat Bowser and see the end sequence with just 70 stars, but that's not 'finished' in **N64** Magazine's book...







Course 2 WHOMP'S FORTRESS



△ This could be subtitled 'Retro World', reviving familiar obstacles (like this Piranha Plant) from traditional Mario platformers and inflating them to fearsome 3D with a magic footpump.



△ Can you grab the coin without being pushed off by moving blocks? Chestnut Rating: 6



△ Move, wait, move, wait – it can only mean rising, falling Thwomps. Chestnut Rating: 9



△ Who makes these bridges that hold just long enough to run across? Chestnut rating: 8

The Lakitu Bros are already on the scene when you arrive in Course 2, and they reveal a method for creeping up on snoozy Piranha Plants. But this being the famously free-form *Super Mario 64*, it's not without alternatives. Crawling on hands and knees will let you get close enough for a swipe, or you could try a daring running dive. Go on, dare.

Once again, the succession of traps and foes gives you something to follow through the sprawl of brick walls and concrete slopes. Pursuing the theme, even the monsters look like stone slabs and attack by simply falling on you like the proverbial tonne. Fans may recognise a sinister blue incarnation of the Thwomps from the very first *Mario Bros*. Most opponents are slow enough to dodge, with care, and the walking Whomps reveal a suspiciously plastered crack on their backs when prone. Jumping on this weak spot merely produces a couple of coins, after which they stagger to their feet. Aw. But beef up your attack to a butt slam and they splinter in a cloud of dust and gold. Huzzah and that!

As you ride the last lift, it's hard not to notice that your next problem is (a) undoubtedly a boss, and (b) larger than the bonus levels of many other video games. When he decides to fall on you, there's plenty of running to do before you can consider yourself clear. The good news is that he resembles the smaller Whomps you dealt with earlier. And the same technique you learned earlier can be applied on a grand scale. Don't dawdle on his back, though – when the Giant Whomp stands, you might slide off with enough momentum to shoot clear of the entire fortress course. Did we mention that it's magically suspended in the stratosphere, or that its deceptive slopes can propel you into freefall?





controls

HE FLIES!



Thanks to the power of the analogue stick, flying with the Wing Cap is much like piloting a plane. Push forward on the stick to dive, pull back to climb, then left or right to bank. Mario slowly loses altitude with time, but with tidy glider mechanics you can exchange speed for height and vice versa according to the law of Diminishing Returns.

Once you've donned the Wing Cap, jump on the spot three times or perform a long triple jump. (The latter doesn't impart



△ Likes to wait just behind corners that looked safe to run around mere seconds earlier.



◁ Our television screen had trouble accommodating the footie pitch fizzog of the Giant Whomp.



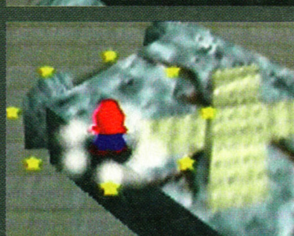


△ Hiding your Achilles' Heel in the small of your back, eh? Clever, I'll admit...

△ ... but not clever enough. There isn't a single critter in Super Mario 64's bestiary that doesn't possess either a weakness or a use.

△ One of the smallest courses in the game, true, but the concentration of features, creatures and hard-to-reachers easily makes up for that.





△ Run clear, do a reverse flip and hit the Z trigger for a stylishly death slam.

◁ Then ruin the moment by sliding off like an oily tick.

SCRAPPING
With no disrespect to our Finnish cousins, we direct you to page 46 of your game manual and in particular, the picture of a feisty fist-throwing Mario with the caption 'SLAG!'. Hold that thought. Very few creatures in *SM64* are invulnerable, so test all of your attacks on them.

Your punch-kick combo, though easy, is best used for cork blocks and switches. Against animated foes, the advantage of the headstomp is that you don't get knocked back, you don't punch your coin reward into No Man's Land, and you can be facing any direction. However, headstomping Flyguys and Flowerheads can have unexpected and undesirable consequences.

You're going off to try jumping on a Flyguy now, aren't you? Tchoh.



SIX FOOT PIZZA
Falling from high places needn't be painful. If you have some forward momentum, hitting A or B at the last moment will cause you to bellyflop for a safe landing. Better still, hit the Z trigger to implement 'air brakes' just before impact and butt slam the final part of your fall.

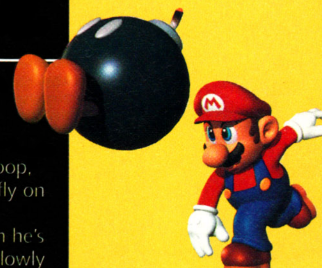
any extra speed, but you do feel like Superman.) For greatest effect, however, jump into a cannon and aim high.

● Holding Up-C grants an overhead view of Mario in flight, skewed so that you can watch his shadow move across the ground. Gauge altitude as the distance between Mario and his shadow, then use the butt slam (Z trigger) to make precision landings. Fixing the camera in the air with R and

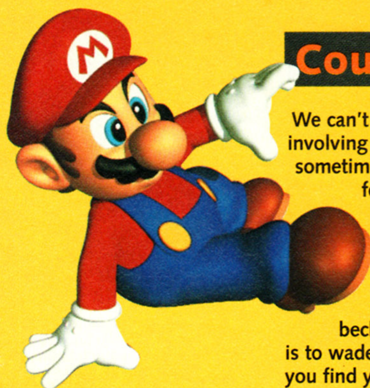


flying away from it will give you a panoramic view of the world below.

● The controls don't allow for a true loop, sadly, but it is possible to make Mario fly on his back by diving into a downward corkscrew and spiralling up again when he's fully turned over. (Push stick to 030°, slowly rotate through to 150° and pull back hard.) Wonder if JD knows a name for this particular manoeuvre?



GO! GO!



Course 3 JOLLY ROGER BAY

We can't think of a better testament to its involving nature than to mention that sometimes, while playing *SM64*, you will forget to breathe. Yes, welcome to the first water world. The narrow stretch of beach where you start holds little more than a box of coins, so the only sensible response to that vast beckoning expanse of cold blue water is to wade in. Just a few strokes with A and you find yourself floating above a world of reeds and sand: shoals of beautiful fish dart away, giant clam shells yawn to show off their red coin pearls. It might even be relaxing if that health meter wasn't losing its segments with unnerving regularity.

Further on, you recognise the base of the three spiky pinnacles of rock that were visible from the beach. Suddenly the ocean floor just drops away, and although there's a murkiness that clouds the depths, you can still make out a large bulky shape below. The sunken galleon is lodged on the sea bed, but seems to be home to a sea creature whose jaws leer at you from its upper hatch.

Having taken as close a look as you fancy, you paddle urgently to the surface for a breather. On your return, that hatch is eerily vacant – and something large just brushed past overhead...

Zipping through the hatch, you find yourself actually inside the wreck. You can't open the submerged yellow box, but four treasure chests in the sand-clogged prow below suggest a puzzle and, after some trial and error, you discover that they need to be touched in the correct, uninterrupted order. Get it right and the chest opens with a rush of breathable air. Get it wrong and an electric jolt saps your depleting health meter.

With the fourth chest cracked, the water in the wreck drains away to grant breathing space and solid ground. You should be able to headbutt that yellow box now – but you can't because the evacuation of water has turned the hull of the ship into one enormous, slippery, seaweed-draped slide, with the box taunting you from the very top. Hnngh.

A scattering of jutting ledges leads up, so you try jumping from one to the next, but it only takes one wrong foot to send you skittering all the way back down. Patience,



△ A pleasing 'murk' factor in the water separates the safety of the shallows...



△ ... from the dangers of the deep. You'll need to swim further.



△ The bay taunts you away from your desolate patch of sand and into the unknown with, seemingly, miles of deep dark sea. A daunting moment.

CANNONS

You'd have to be mad to travel like this and, luckily, Mario is a glittery star short of a deelybopper. Almost every 'outdoor' course boasts a cannon transport, but each one has to be activated by talking to the local Pink Bob-Omb – something that may only be possible after defeating a boss, gaining a specific star



or reaching a difficult spot. Make sure you save the game if you want the cannon to stay open after death or reset.

Perfectly recreating the physics of a small fat Italian in a tube with a powder keg at one end, Mario is propelled on a ballistic trajectory – aim around 45° and you'll cover the most ground. Judging the cannon angles correctly is something that comes with practice, but you'll see plenty of memorable background details to line up your shot. Where possible, aim to intercept a tree or flagpole on your trajectory: Mario will grab it automatically on the fly-by. If wearing a Wing Cap, Mario gets an extra burst of power at the height of the trip.

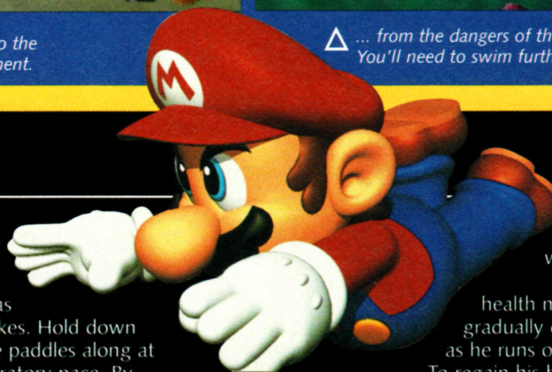
• By aiming low and hitting A once or twice as you push forward to recover from the impact, you can coolly land running from a cannon shot.



controls

HE SWIMS!





Once in the water, Mario has two strokes. Hold down B and he paddles along at an exploratory pace. By repeatedly tapping B at just the right rhythm, his breast stroke grants the extra speed to overcome minor currents and escape the peripheral pull of a whirlpool. Mario's health meter is gradually depleted as he runs out of air. To regain his breath, Mario needs to return to the surface and float there (so remember: you can always restore your health on any course with a pool of water).

skill and the odd cathartic expletive are best employed: when you do finally smash the box, you really feel you've earned the Power Star that leaps out. And what an adventure. It's this kind of superior, action-based puzzle, constantly testing you with new but consistent challenges, that really shows off the genius of *SM64*.

Upon your return to the course for Star 2, you realise that the galleon didn't just drain out, but had actually floated to the ocean surface. You can already see it, waiting out there in the bay...



Fish have a peculiar habit of shoaling in your air bubbles. We don't know why.



This would be a great surprise if the game didn't say 'Star 1: Plunder In The Sunken Ship.'



Throw yourself into SM64, and who knows what precious wonders wait around the corner?



The hatch is open. Get inside. Get inside now, goddammit.



I have done something right, it seems, for I am rewarded.



Gnnh. One of those pad-hurling moments, definitely.



Lady Luck honours an I.O.U. Now, if I can... just... reach....

POLES
There are three ways to dismount poles.

- Press Z to just let go and drop with buttock-eroding simplicity.
- Press A to jump DIRECTLY backwards – the most precise method for transferring from one pole to another, and essential on some courses.
- Climb to the top, push Up again to handstand, then A to somersault. Even if you don't leap, the handstand is worth trying to unearth those valuable 1-Up mushrooms.



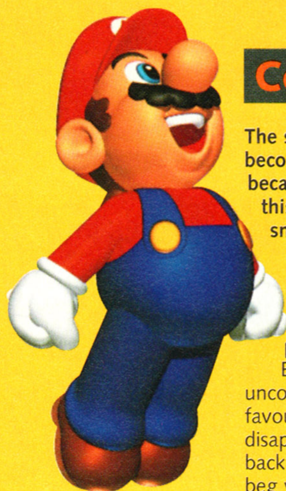


N64 TIP

Where no shore exists, getting out of the water and onto a ledge is a common initial problem. Face the ledge straight on, pull directly Down on the stick and immediately press Jump, letting the stick return to neutral as you do so. Push Towards or press Jump again to bounce up once you've gripped the edge. You can lead into a triple jump from this...



GO! GO!



Course 4 COOL COOL MOUNTAIN

The slippy slidey ice world may have become a cliché in platforming, but that's because it's so rarely done well. But take this course: ice slide races, rolling snowball chases, rickety lifts, crunchy snowbanks to break your fall, glassy ledges to let you glimpse seemingly unreachable stars – and, okay, a very slippy floor adjoining a deadly precipice. It's all here.

Exploring the cabin at the course start uncovers no entrance other than Santa's favourite. No problem. Just before you disappear down the chimney with the backflip that those stacked coins above beg you to perform, you notice a little penguin squawking away nearby. How very cute and ornithological.

Inside, the ice chute looks rather more daunting than that beginner's effort in the castle. True, but several lives later you're still having too many thrills to quit, and in a cavalier mood, you spot a line of coins and aim to collect the lot. Your reward is a greater than expected, as they lead you straight into a secret high speed shortcut.

Just before you collect your star, you talk to the curiously tall penguin sitting in her pool nearby. She's lost her infant – presumably a LITTLE PENGUIN – and seems rather upset about it. Now, where's that mental notepaper?

The next star isn't the babysitting easy ride you thought. That penguin doesn't want to be picked up, and when you accidentally make a running dive it even imitates your failure. The next problem is that you can only waddle while holding it, you'll drop it when hit, and you need to get to the base of the mountain. As expected, the handy warp point won't take you both. Slides, bridges, bouncing snowmen guards – it's unlikely that you'll make it back to the mother in one piece.

And this is actually a great twist, because suddenly the game withdraws all of those abilities you've spent time learning and asks you to get by without them for a while; to take the long routes again; and to run after annoying little penguins that have a habit of sidestepping when Mario chases them onto slippy floors overlooking deadly precipices. Okay, it *can* be frustrating too but isn't that just the way?

● Yes, you can drop that little penguin off the edge of the course.

SLIDE RULES

Scattered throughout the game, these slippery slides give you the chance to earn coins and and stars – if you can hang on to the finishing line, that is. Pushing forward is your accelerator, while pulling back applies the brakes.

Surprisingly, the biggest initial problem for novices is that they cautiously avoid going too fast. Their downfall comes in the shape of some steeply banked corners, with realistic forces dragging them off the inside of the track. Unless you're going at near top speed, you may not have enough centripetal force to hang on. So slide, Charlie Brown, slide!

• Choose the closest MarioCam view and bellyflop onto the slide (run and hit B) for the champion's challenge. With a backflip, you can even do the whole thing backwards...





▽ Lines of coins are to be followed like moist crumbs in an enchanted forest – they'll show you the way.



△ As predicted, a world of adventure is preceded by a dark foreboding hole. Hmm.



△ 'Ice' to see you, to see you – no, wait, come back. It wasn't even my joke!



△ Can these two snowy scenes possibly be related? We think they might – it's just the way our brilliant minds work.



This was a successful mission. Note my humble energy bar – it happens to the best of us. ▽









Dark World 1 BATTLE WITH BOWSER



Let's highlight one of those glorious Nintendo touches, shall we? You see a picture of Peach. You run towards it. The picture changes. Woo-ah-ha-hah...





No matter how many angles you try, none of it looks any friendlier.



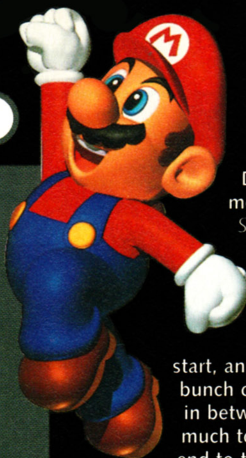




Dennis Hopper. Dennis Hopper. Dennis Hopper. Dennis Hopper.

Bowser, the Koopa King: a really nasty piece of work.

Even when you've blown him up, your mistrust of Bowser will prompt you to sidestep his falling shell. You just can't be too careful with him.



Want to know what's behind those sliding Star Doors? The three Dark Worlds are the most linear sections of *SM64*, being more like what you might initially have imagined when you heard the phrase '3D platformer'. There's a start, and a finish, and a whole bunch of moving 3D obstacles in between, and there's not much to do but get from one end to the other by gauging the jumps and the timing and surviving to the end.

That said, they're not what you'd call disappointing. Rather, they're bonus diversions designed to build you up for a conflict with Bowser. In this capacity they work very well, being hard enough to disguise the fact (yes, is this a rare criticism) that battles with Bowser are actually quite short, and bit too easy. Each Dark World has the customary eight coins to collect for a Secret Star, a surplus of 1-Up mushrooms, even the odd shortcut.

It's hard to imagine that you don't know something about this by now, but let's assume you've just returned to civilisation and bought an N64 to help you forget about that tropical island and the old man dying and Brooke Shields being your sister and stuff.

Bowser, the Koopa King, is the bad guy. He's the one who has kidnapped Peach and turned her castle into a sinister wonderland. Wouldn't you like the chance to take him on *mano a mano*?

Probably, but only because you haven't yet realised just how enormous and spiky he is. In this first encounter, Bowser has two attacks at his disposal. His stomp will make the ground shake, fixing you on the spot temporarily unless you've jumped clear to avoid the shock. His second attack is to breathe fire, which he tends to announce well in advance with a chesty intake of air. It's at this point, while he's frozen to the spot, that you've got the best chance of grabbing his tail.

Remember the Bomb King? If you can grab Bowser from behind, he's yours for the throwing. When you've established a hold, start to spin the stick – slowly, then faster, and Mario will spin on the spot. The only way to beat the Koopa is to land him on one of those spiked bombs at the edge of the arena. To do that, you'll need to build up plenty of momentum and press B again when you think you're aiming true. It helps if you can lure Bowser right next to one of the bombs before grabbing him.

He's defeated by this, but not killed; all you've done is to banish him to the further reaches of the castle. He drops a key as he vanishes. Now, which of those castle doors will it fit?

• When the flames clear, you'll often find one or two gold coins. Very useful for renewing your health meter after a case of the flaming trousers.

JUMPING

Backflipping is really the beginner's high jump. Tricky at first, it's the reverse somersault that will become your saviour in times of trouble. All it takes is for the stick to be jerked against the direction Mario is running before you hit Jump. This means you can can keep moving without the pause for flourish that follows a backflip. By running in a small circle you can actually build up full running speed in a very tight space.

When you headbutt a yellow !-box, tap jump again to turn it into a double jump on the spot and you'll be able to collect the freed 1-Ups and coin bunches before they scatter and flee.

• If something tempts you from beyond the reach of your normal jumps, you'll probably need to use wall kicks. With repeated wall kicks you can actually 'climb' between two facing walls, Mega-Man style, to scale sheer surfaces.

• The mechanism for reverse somersaults is generous enough to be exploited. Try running straight forward, jerk the stick Right then hard Left as you press Jump for a sideways somersault. It's a chipper escape manoeuvre when a platform starts to give way.



GO! GO!



POWER UP!

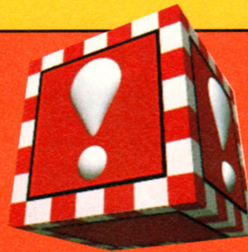
No *Mario* adventure would be complete without a set of power-ups to temporarily boost our hero's abilities. In the past, they've included a pretty weird assortment of enhancements – raccoon suits, magic capes, fire flowers, suspicious size-altering mushrooms – that make *SM64's* selection look decidedly functional by comparison. Nevertheless, we don't think you'll be disappointed when you actually try them out – "Ooooh..." and "Wahay!" being common responses.

Mario absorbs his new powers simply by putting on a different cap, which he obtains from the coloured boxes you'll see scattered around the courses. However, each power has to be discovered: until you find and activate the corresponding switch, those boxes will appear translucent and cannot be used.

If you want to get hold of the power-ups then, as in *Super Mario World*, you'll have to find the corresponding 'Switch Palace' and activate it to make the translucent boxes tangible. The boxes contain power-ups in the form of magic Mario Caps, and once they're solid you can bump them for their contents indefinitely. Cap Blocks are restored long before your power-up wears out.

WING CAP

With wings on his cap, Mario can fly anywhere over the course with total freedom. More truthfully the cap is more a gliding power-up with no true ability to actually gain height. However, the loss of height is very slow and easy to forget and with a good jump from a high place, or a shot from a cannon, Mario can take an eagle's view of the entire level and spend an age swooping and diving. Believe us, the flying experience looks and feels *great* – as compelling as *Pilotwings 64*, no less.





Red Switch Course

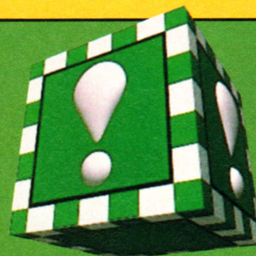
Upon collecting a total of ten stars, you'll notice that the castle hallway is illuminated by a radiant beam of light. Standing on the tiled star, look up with the aid of the Top C 'headcam'. Stare straight at the source of the ray using the stick and prepare your head for what follows...

To activate the red !-switch, you'll first need to land on the tower at the centre of this extra level. Once safely grounded, stepping on the switch will make all the red !-boxes in the game permanently appear. Exit the Tower of the Wing Cap by simply dropping out of the sky, whereupon you'll fall back to the castle hallway without losing a life.

As an added bonus, you can find a Secret Star in this area by following the treasure spiral in the air to collect all eight red coins.

METAL CAP

The Metal Cap – or 'Terminator Mario', as we fondly think of this power-up – has two very interesting properties. One is invulnerability to damage, the other is increased mass. You'll sink like a stone under water and can happily stroll through undercurrents and whirlpools that would carry off our un-enhanced hero. The ability to behave 'normally' in and under water is vital to some puzzles. That's a clue.





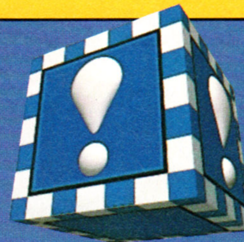
Green Switch Course

This area is hidden in a part of Course 6, so you won't be able to reach the green switch until you've located Nessie's cavern. Swim onto her back, run from her tail up to her head and guide her by facing the direction you want her to travel. There's a double door in one wall of her lair that isn't sealed-off, so jump off at the red mesh jetty and make your way through to a second silvery pool.

Time is short on the other side, so don't stop to dawdle at the transformation. While you're invulnerable, clear a path to the narrow bridge and simply throw yourself at anything that so much as looks at you in a hostile manner. Until you've activated the switch, you won't be able to use the Metal Caps held by those green boxes. And without them, you'll find the force of the flow can eject you through the

VANISH CAP

This also grants invincibility, but of a different nature. Mario becomes ethereally ghostly, looking like a poorly-tuned TV reception of his former self. In this intangible state he can pass straight through monsters, fences, objects and even some thin walls or partitions. Needless to say, some puzzles can only be solved with this power. Wherever you find a Vanish Cap, you can be sure that some of those nearby surfaces aren't as solid as they look.





Blue Switch Course

Before you can reach the Blue Switch, you'll need to drain the Castle moat – a task that requires you to have beaten Bowser for the first key. Down in the dungeon, near the entrance to Course 6, is a plain wooden door. If you swim down into the pool inside and follow the passage you'll find yourself in yet another pool room. Those two pillars standing in the water control the drainage for the moat. Butt slam both of them in no particular order and you'll evacuate the water not just in here, but outside as well. Now you can step through that mysterious rusting steel door and look for a hole in the floor of the moat.

Drop down inside and you're in the Switch Course. There are some incredible perspectives to admire as Mario slides down the slope.



▽ *Some games use flash lighting effects as just that. Miyamoto sees them as playing hints. Take heed.*



△ *Quite possibly the most enjoyable thing in the game, if not the world, is flying Mario around the sky.*

◁ *After you activate the Red Switch Palace, every red box in the game solidifies, freeing up their contents.*

castle's waterfall. It's a long hike back for a second attempt.

This green Cap Switch course also holds a secret Star that reveals itself when all eight red coins are gathered. The perfect opportunity to test your new-found powers, no? Take a look at that yellow box near the waterfall to see how the Metal Cap can help.





The quicksilver pool is such an incredible effect that we still refuse to believe it's possible. Instead we credit the illusion to mirrors, beer and bread-based mycotoxins, variously. ▷

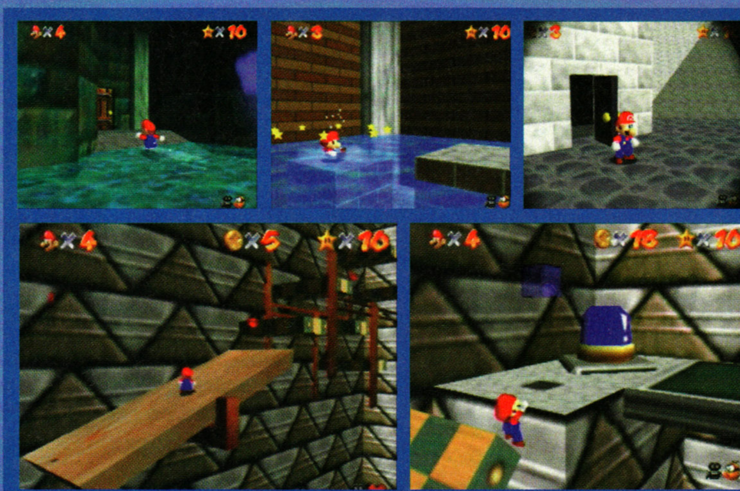




The Vanish Cap offers incorporeality, letting Mario walk through walls. Needless to say, a few stars will only reveal themselves when you possess this special ability. Start by securing the Blue Switch Course's secret star: that means collecting the eight red coins, four on the slope and four on the chequered lifts. The Power Star itself appears behind the wire mesh grille, where you can also earn a 1-Up by collecting all three gold coins.

• An oddity of that first slippy slope (and several others in the game: you'll just have to experiment) is that you can crawl up it and around it like an Italian Spiderman by holding the Z trigger.

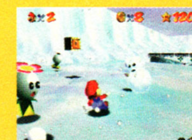
As long as you stay on hands and knees when you move around, you can go anywhere and even, should you fancy it, climb all the way back. No excuse for missing a red coin, therefore.



SHY GUYS

The shyness of the enemies in any particular screenshot here could make you understandably suspicious that the levels are a bit lacking in the monster department. You won't find yourself tackling wave after wave of Koopas as in *Super Mario World*, true, but that's because the complex landscapes demand that much more of your concentration to negotiate. Guiding Mario's jump with analogue aftertouch initially complicates headstomping, while the spooky Red Flyguy who hovers silently out of view before unleashing his homing flame with a tell-tale hiss will cause more than a few panicked deaths even when you learn to read his unpleasant behaviour.

You'll still encounter Goombas and Bob-Ombs gathering to ambush you but, recalling the flying Koopa guard who rose and fell between platforms in earlier ventures, *SM64* knows that a single enemy in the right place is far deadlier. When you're swinging from hand to hand over a bottomless chasm via a ceiling net, it only takes one teeny weeny bat to really *ruin* your day.





AND THERE'S MORE

Unless you read next month's **N64**, you'll miss our decidedly unusual guide to Mario's slyly held secrets. Intrigued? Can't wait? Ah, good.

The world is now divided into those who have, and those who haven't. Yet. Trouble is that, by its very nature, the haven't-yets can't possibly comprehend what they're missing in *Super Mario 64*. Incredible as it must seem, this, this... this video game can reduce proud bestubbled men to moist-eyed infants who can't be quizzed sensibly on the subject without burbling about the bestest thing in the whole world ever ever ever. We'll do our damnedest to remain level-headed, but the pressure of bottling up so many superlatives may soon take its toll.

Once you've got over the raw sensory shock of seeing Mario in action, consummately showing off his company's new 64-bit hardware to the shoop-thud of jaw-on-floor contact, you'll gradually wake up to an incredibly clever game of the kind that only Nintendo seems able to pull off nowadays. It's a perfect application of traditional tenets to 'next gen' potential, and every moment spent holding the pad makes demands of your reflexes, practiced expertise, lateral thinking and on-the-spot decisiveness. It's that feeling you encountered in *Mario World* plus *Zelda III* plus *Super Metroid* plus *Yoshi's Island*, multiplied by 3D and divided by zero.

PLAYGROUND

In essence, *Super Mario 64* will remind you of nothing so much as an enormous adventure playground. Every level is a purposely sculptured landscape crammed full of slides and tunnels and obstacle courses, with all sorts of treasures and shortcuts to discover. To complement this, Mario is now the most able and versatile game character you've ever controlled, and as you grow familiar with his incredible range of acrobatic skills, so your mastery is rewarded with new areas or routes that you didn't even notice the first time. Curiously attempt to climb a tree and you'll find that, not only can he shin-up like a king scrumper but somersault from the top too. The sensation of total freedom is as exhilarating as it is daunting.

So much so, in fact, that you'll regularly find yourself distracted from the actual business of game-solving by amusing diversions such as Mario's stunt moves. Surfing with the Koopa Shell or dive-bombing with the Wing Cap are so entertaining in themselves that you'll forget where you were supposed to be going. And no matter how many times you switch on your console, the pleasure of simply messing about with the controller to see the hyperactive plumber leaping and tumbling will never truly leave you.

Okay, so the playground analogy turns a shade wicked when you discover a pool of quicksand or a poisonous gas trap (not the most popular leisure attractions, barring "MORTICIA ADDAMS IN TOWN PLANNING SCANDAL" type incidents) but your role as intrepid explorer would be seriously undermined without the prospect of danger. And there's plenty of that.

Thanks to the N64's immense processing power and dedicated gaming architecture, the sophisticated 3D environments are superior to anything you've ever encountered before – happily trouncing the sniffiest of high-end PCs with accelerator boards, let alone CD-based consoles. It steps beyond mere



△ *Magic carpets, rainbows, flying: oh the unrestrained joy of the whole experience. Even James is smiling. For once.*









SOUND PHILOSOPHY

For Nintendo, aural is as important as visual information. Caverns echo, monsters squeal and scrabble forth upon spotting you (it's behind you!), distant noises get louder as you approach with perfect proportion. You may also notice that, because it's chip-derived, the background music instantly reacts to your situation in a way that CD-streamed accompaniment cannot. When you first step onto the beach at Jolly Roger Bay, for instance, you'll hear the basic melody of the course. As soon as you dive into the water, a few more channels of sound suddenly add depth with stereo backing and rhythm tracks. And when you finally step out into the smuggler's cave on the far side, the bass and percussion are cued in for that final atmosphere of achievement. Subtly influential.

The efforts of Nintendo composer Koji Kondo have been unfairly criticised in some quarters, a knee-jerk reaction from those incapable of believing that chip music could be any good. Let's face it, not everything would benefit from a Chemical Brothers soundtrack. But take the spooky marimbas that fade into an off-kilter fairground organ as you stumble through the Ghost House, or the sublime tripped-out bliss of the sitars and tablas on the 'hot' levels, and you've got a complementary aural background that's wholly appropriate to what you see on screen. Fans may even spot some ingenious re-workings of older, familiar *Mario* tunes. For a launch title, Nintendo's thoughtful implementation of an oft-ignored aspect of video games is very promising indeed.











Cubes roll, impossibly; Big Boo invites you in; Jugem prepares to drop his spiny payload. Only Mario, a strange hybrid of hyperactive infant and trained Marine, could cope here.

aesthetic brilliance by allowing every object you encounter to become game-real: if it's there, it's there to be interacted with. Every surface possesses not just a specific texture but a set of qualities that determine whether it's sticky, or grabbable, or viscous, or ultra-slippy, right down to the sound your butt would make if you went for a Burton on it. It's the most successfully realised 3D world ever realised.

POP UP

You'll also experience a remarkable sense of distance and scale because 'pop-up' – the sudden appearance of objects and buildings as you draw near – is radically reduced. When you first climb to the top of the mountain in Bob-Omb's Battlefield, take time to look over the edge and you'll still be able to make out the warp point that caught you on the hop ten minutes earlier, or the cannon emplacement where you first started.

Yet another minor miracle occurs when you examine those same things close up. *Mario 64* is the very first video game to abolish pixels, with sumptuously rich textures and invisibly smooth animation. Miyamoto's avowed attempt to create an interactive cartoon is so successful that just watching somebody else play – especially if they're none too good yet but have a propensity for incredible jamminess in tight scrapes – can be more amusing than vintage Tom & Jerry.

A key to this compulsive quality is the sheer variety of tasks that await. One moment you're being spat into the stratosphere by a cannon, the next you're hurtling down an ice slide with a giant penguin in hot pursuit. An hour ago you were dodging ghosts on a haunted carousal: now you're chasing the tail of a manta ray in shark-infested waters. The pace is constantly changing, shuttling you from lazy ocean paddling to high speed racing, while the levels themselves maintain that unpredictability, with claustrophobic mazes suddenly opening onto sprawling arenas. And yet it never jars because the focus is always – literally – on Mario, whose silkily-animated repertoire can tackle every eventuality in the manner you expect and beyond. If I wanted to get pretentious, I'd claim that it's in these finer touches that you discover the difference between craft and true art.

The only thing that you may not like about *SM64* on first acquaintance, is the way your view of the proceedings seems to be constantly shifting. Because of the relative directional controls, this leads to all sorts of disasters when the uninitiated try running across rooftops or narrow gangplanks, and could conceivably deter a novice player who doesn't realise what he/she is doing wrong. In time you'll come to regard *SM64's* extensive camera freedom as yet another remarkable quality not found in lesser games, but only after a few painful and swear-worthy lessons in its careful use.

SPOILER

Any reviews you may have seen last year will have been based on the Japanese version of the game. The only disappointment about the English translation is that you're suddenly aware of how much text is in the game, and how much that text can ruin your enjoyment by going too far with hints, tips and directions. It's much more rewarding to start a new course with no clue of what's in store, slowly making those grand discoveries for yourself through search and experiment. Instead, *Mario 64* is littered with unavoidable signposts like "Go on, try jumping down that chimney over there!" as if you would never think of doing so. This sort of spoiler has never been necessary in any previous *Mario* outing, and its inclusion here (presumably to make the N64's launch title more accessible to video game virgins) severely curtails the challenge for more accomplished players.

Super Mario 64 is not a small affair by any means, squeezing more than enough into its 64 megabits cartridge to make arguments about magnetic vs optical storage look ill-informed and irrelevant. The only threat to its longevity is that you will play it solidly, day and night, feigning illness to skip work and missing dates with potential life partners, until you've finished. At which point you'll wish there was more and desperately search each level for something you might have missed. Ah well, you won't be able to leave it alone for long. Replay value is surprisingly high and a month after initiation you'll have perfected a whole new clutch of tricks, manoeuvres and shortcuts.

"The best game ever?" Possibly, but then it's so far ahead of everything that comparisons seem meaningless. You have never played anything like *Mario 64*, and only when you do so will you understand just what all the fuss is about. So buy it. Play it. Revel in it. Dream in it. Rejoice at the luck of being born in the right time to experience it. *Super Mario 64* has arrived, and things will never be the same again.

ZY



9 VISUALS
Words simply cannot do it justice. Which is a nuisance. Rats.

8 SOUNDS
Simple fare, so cleverly employed that you won't notice it grow on you.

9 MASTERY
A totally immersive lesson in game design, feedback and control.

8 LIFESPAN
It's such a disaster to finish *SM64* that you'll pretend you haven't, and start all over.

VERDICT
Swahili holds the only word to sum it up. *SM64* is absolutely tsufufum.

96%

TO BE CONTINUED... Next month, the **N64** guide to finishing with 70 stars the fastest.

SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

The Force is on the prowl again, and this time Luke wants YOU for a Rebel trooper.



Star Wars = still exciting. Nintendo 64 = pulse rate record-breakingly exciting. Star Wars game on Nintendo 64 = Nurse, I think I'm going to… Oh dear.

Yes, when *Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire* was confirmed as one of the N64's launch games, only those very near to clinical brain death failed to show any interest. Timed to coincide with the release of the re-worked *Star Wars Trilogy* first at the Cinema, then on sell-through video, it seemed there was no way that the game could fail.

And, for the most part, *Shadows* is excellent. Ten levels, varying game styles and an all-new storyline (set between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*) give it some moments of sheer, unadulterated Nintendo/LucasArts brilliance. However, as **N64**'s patented *Yodometer*™ will show, other bits have slipped silently down the back of the Dark Side's settee.

Each separate part of the game is explained and rated here, with the *Yodometer*™ at the end as well as an overall score. Read on – you can get your old Millennium Falcon out of the loft later.

Shadows of the Empire		
NINTENDO/LUCASARTS		
	64M	 1
~~Controller Pak back-up~~	On cartridge back-up	Out now
£59.99		

Before you start…

There are a couple of things you need to know.

- Throughout the game you play as the unfortunately-named Dash Rendar, a friend of Han Solo and a fellow rebel fighter. His ship, the Outrider, is similar to the Millennium Falcon and is co-piloted by Dash's mechanical mate, Leebo.
- Scattered through each of the game's ten levels are floating icons called 'Challenge Points'. Collecting enough of these can earn you extra lives at the end of the level. If you collect all of them on all of the levels, you'll gain a special bonus at the end of the game.

Level 1 THE BATTLE OF HOTH

The setting
Imperial forces have located the rebel base on Hoth and are attacking with Probe Droids, AT-ST's (Scoutwalkers) and AT-AT's.

Your mission
Destroy the Imperial forces using your Snowspeeder.

How it plays
The first level of *Shadows* is one of the most impressive. The feel of the Snowspeeder under the control of the analogue stick is superb and the attention to detail on the graphics second-to-none. Check out the Snowspeeder's airbrakes as they rise and fall. This will be one of the best flying shoot-'em-ups you'll ever play.

Challenge
Although on the 'Medium' difficulty setting the Battle of Hoth is quite easy, 'Hard' and 'Jedi' are a definite challenge. Destroying the AT-ATs with the tow cable is especially difficult and on every setting other than 'Easy' you can only have a limited number of attempts. A combination of fantastic good looks and sublime handling will keep you coming back to this again and again.

Challenge Point tips
Each of the level's three AT-AT's destroyed using the tow cable will earn you a challenge point.



There are four stages to level one but only the last two have AT-ATs in them. Tripping them up takes lots of practice.









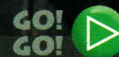
Attack AT-ATs and AT-STs from the side to keep out of their line of fire.



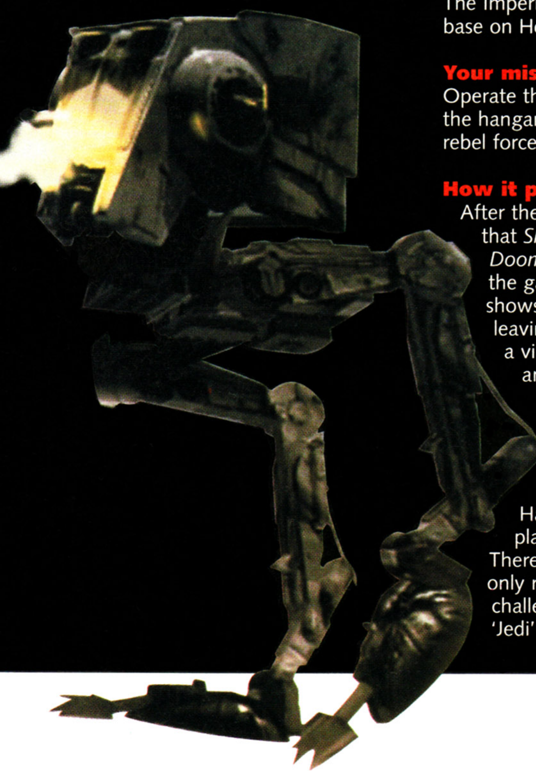
The harder the game setting the fewer hits your Snowspeeder can take before you crash and burn.

Here's how it works
Some of the ten *SOTE* levels are good (in the way of the Force) and some aren't (turned to the Dark Side). Read on.

WAY OF THE FORCE ↑
THE DARK SIDE ↓



Level 2 ESCAPE FROM ECHO BASE



The setting
The Imperial forces have overrun the Rebel base on Hoth.

Your mission
Operate the emergency generators to open the hangar doors and allow the remaining rebel forces to escape.

How it plays
After the fantastic opening, it's a pity that *Shadows* reverts immediately to a *Doom* style shoot-'em-up. Viewing the game from over Dash's shoulder shows how unrealistic his animation is, leaving only the first-person view as a viable option. The Storm Trooper animation is carried off well though and the AT-ST boss is tricky (until you realise you only have to keep behind it).

Challenge
Hardcore *Doom* and *Quake* players will have no trouble here. There are no puzzles to solve and the only real challenge is finding all ten challenge points. Play on 'Hard' or 'Jedi' to make things difficult.

Challenge Point tips
The only tricky challenge points are in the room with red cylinder (behind a secret door) and when the ground splits at the end (stay still and wait for the CP to appear in front of you). The final CP is after the boss, behind the boxes, Wampa and across the chasm.



Playing with the over-the-shoulder view can make things unnecessarily hard.



Dash runs like a man with piles. Switch to the Doom view immediately.

Wampas are tough but slow. No problem.



Level 5 GALL SPACEPORT

Your jetpack can only be used for short periods between recharges. Use it sparingly or you'll soon be plummeting to an early death.



The setting
The imperial base on the moon of Gall.

Your mission
Find Boba Fett and kill him (if possible).

How it plays
Gall Spaceport is definitely one of the best first-person levels. The jetpack that you pick up along the way adds a surprising amount to the game and in places there are almost enough enemies to keep experienced gamers challenged.

Challenge
Whilst more enemies wouldn't have gone amiss, mastering the jetpack on this level is good fun. The mid-level AT-ST boss as well as Boba Fet and his ship, Slave 1, also mean that you'll certainly not finish level five on your first couple of goes. There are also 15 Challenge Points to find.

Challenge Point tips
Indoors (in the section with the bridges) there's a Challenge Point and an extra life icon. Also look on top of the tower, down below the first car ride and out and above that same cave.



Time your jump to avoid these rotating ventilation fans.

Your gun automatically targets enemies.

A shuttle transports you between level sections.

Probe droids pop up from nowhere to shoot at you. Fortunately, they're not too tough.

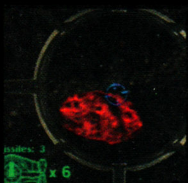
The AT-ST is the mid-level boss. Attack it from behind.

WAY OF THE FORCE ↑

THE DARK SIDE ↓

Level 3 THE ASTEROID FIELD

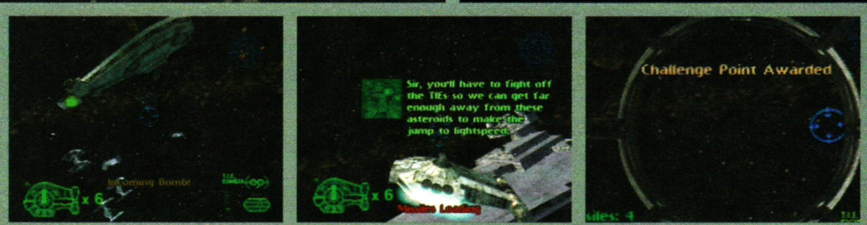
This red asteroid contains one of the six challenge points. They can be difficult to spot and are accessible only for a short while.







You can play from inside or outside the Outrider. You choose!



The setting
The asteroid belt around Hoth.

Your mission
Shoot down pursuing TIE Fighters (60) and Bombers (20).

How it plays
Badly. None of the views on offer give the original arcade game's feeling of "I can't take it" intensity and there's just not enough variety in the mission to hold your interest for long.

Challenge
The Challenge Points are hard to collect but the rest of the level is far too easy. A big disappointment.

Challenge Point tips
Six altogether, all hidden inside red asteroids. Shoot to collect.

Level 7 SEWERS OF THE IMPERIAL CITY



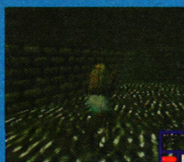
Because you gun automatically targets enemies, you can take them out almost before they're visible.



Your initial target in this level.



The red soldiers are a bit tougher.



The setting
The sewers of the imperial city on the planet Coruscant.

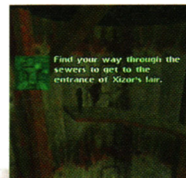
Your mission
Make your way through the sewers to gain access to Xizor's palace above.

How it plays
More first-person fun back with the jetpack and some superb underwater sections. The sewers contain some particularly nasty water monsters and at the end, a flawed but difficult boss.

Challenge
The hardest of the first-person levels even if that's sometimes because you can't always see what's going on. The boss (a giant, multi-tentacled Dianoga) is difficult until you realise you only have to shoot at its eye.

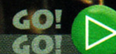
Challenge Point tips:
Nine to collect in all, all occurring before the Dianoga boss. There's an extra life hidden behind the underwater secret door (activated by the two switches in the first big round room).

Watch out for the swimming Dianoga on this level. Your laser gun won't work underwater so it's best to kill any you can see before you jump in.



YODA SCORE 7





Level 4 ORD MANTELL JUNKYARD

The setting
A scrapyard on Ord Mantell, the temporary home to the robotic bounty hunter IG-88.

Your mission
Make your way to the head of the train without falling off and break your way into the Salvation plant to meet IG-88.

How it plays
The most peculiar section of *Shadows*, this is another *Doom*-style level with the accent on running and jumping onto moving trains and carriages. The pace is quite sedate but the twisting tracks, the odd enemy and dangerously low beams add quite a bit of difficulty. Overall, level four is too linear to be enjoyable and frustrating to replay. Getting all the Challenge Points here is a medal-worthy achievement.

Challenge
The train ride itself is annoying rather than difficult and you'll need to have plenty of lives left to deal with the super-tough IG-88 at the end in the Salvation yard. The best tip is to look for the Seeker power-ups and the Health packs up top, in the far right-hand corner of the yard.

Challenge Point tips
There are a hernia-inducing 12 CP to collect, nine on the train ride and three in the Salvation yard (one each at the bottom of the two cylinders and one on top of the hill). Good luck!



Shoot these towers to deactivate their blocking laser beams.






Jump over or duck under these bars. The train moving beneath you makes this more difficult than it sounds.



One of the Challenge Points is actually inside the train.

YODA SCORE 2



Level 5 XIZOR'S PALACE



The only time you'll need to use the over-the-shoulder view is to manoeuvre the jetpacking Dash.



Unfortunately, shooting enemies from way off is still possible.



The boss is a Gladiator droid. Save up your Disruptor missiles to deal with him.



YODA SCORE 6

The setting
The palace of Emperor Palpatine's ally, Prince Xizor.

Your mission
Make your way through the palace and destroy the space elevator that connects the palace to the Skyhook spacestation in orbit above the planet.

How it plays
The final *Doom* level and the last chance to play with your jetpack. There are no real gaming innovations here, just a new kind of enemy – a sort of skeleton droid – and plenty of the red soldiers.

Challenge
Finding you way to the space elevator and setting the bomb is simple enough but the Gladiator Droid boss is a far from easy proposition. You'll have to fight him in three separate stages (his body separates into three separate sections) and it's well worth stockpiling the super-destructive Disruptor ammunition for your encounter.

Challenge Point tips
There are ten in all, and they all occur before the boss. The last one is at the opposite end of the final bridge and comes packaged together with some very useful Disruptor ammunition.

WAY OF THE FORCE ↑

THE DARK SIDE ↓

Level 6 MOS EISLEY AND BEGGAR'S CANYON

The best way to kill the Swoop Riders is to force them into walls. Look for narrow gaps, draw alongside and hold your line as you pass through.



YODA SCORE 1



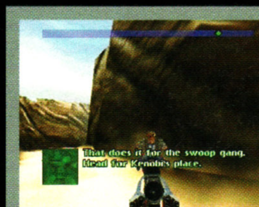
The setting
Luke's home planet.

Your mission
Take out the gang of Swoop riders (using your speeder bike) before they can get to Luke at Obi Wan Kenobi's hut. You might have thought a Jedi Knight could look after himself but, well, you know…

How it plays
Terribly. Although the speeder bike handles incredibly smoothly, the whole level actually moves too fast to be enjoyable. Avoiding obstacles is an impossible nightmare and just scooting along without hitting anything for more than two seconds is an achievement in itself. Killing the swoop riders (by knocking them off their bikes or running them into walls) is also horribly random.

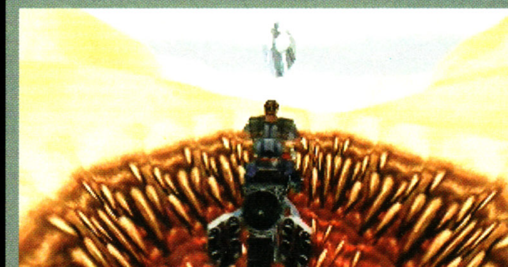
Challenge
Largely a case of hit-and-miss. Very disappointing.

Challenge Point tips
There are 12 altogether, eight in town and four out of it.






Mos Eisley seems strangely deserted as you scoot around. Not that there's really time to look at the scenery.




Don't linger here: you'll be sucked in and eaten.

Level 10 SKYHOOK BATTLE



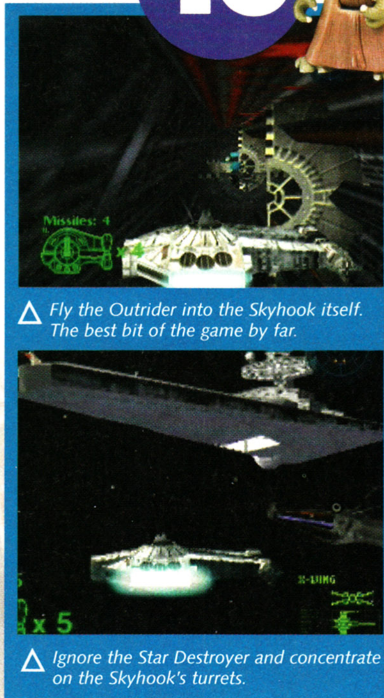
The setting
Xizor's spacestation, Skyhook.

Your mission
Fly the Outrider through the attacking fleet of TIE Fighters and Star Vipers and engage the spacestation. Destroy its protective gun turrets and fly inside the station to destroy the reactor.

How it plays
Better than the Battle of Hoth. Initially, the final level is similar to level three, with plenty of fairly dull air combat on offer. However, once you're in full control of the Outrider, attacking the space station and trying to fly inside it to get at the reactor core, you may not want to play any other 3D shooter again.

Challenge
Easy enough against the small fighters. Surviving the battle outside the Skyhook can be dicey and you'll need close control of the Outrider to successfully pilot it in and out of the space station.

Challenge Point tips
No clues here, you'll have to work this bit out for yourselves.

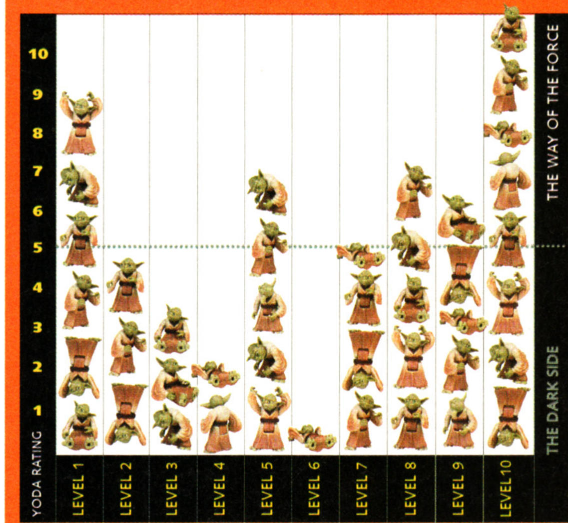


△ Fly the Outrider into the Skyhook itself. The best bit of the game by far.

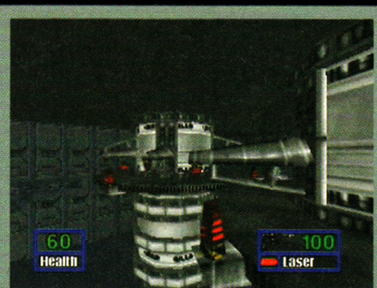
△ Ignore the Star Destroyer and concentrate on the Skyhook's turrets.

N64's patented Yodometer™

The Yodometer measures each level of the game on a Yoda scale of one to ten. One Yoda equates to a very low gaming/technical standard (a level firmly turned towards the Dark Side). Ten Yodas on the other hand, means top notch; something befitting the greatness of the N64 and completely in tune with the way of the force.



Level 7 IMPERIAL FREIGHTER SUPROSA



△ The Loader Droid is dead easy. Strafe in a circular motion and just keep firing.



△ The harder the difficulty setting, the more damage Dash takes from laser fire.

The setting
Infiltrate the freighter and steal its cargo of secret Imperial construction plans.

Your mission
Shoot anything you meet and battle your way to the ship's super computer and defeat the guarding Loader Droid.

How it plays
Another so-so *Doom*-style level. There's some good fun to be had with the Storm Troopers and you'll need a delicate touch to manoeuvre around some of the obstacles. There's a large puzzle room towards the end where you have to work your way up through a series of hangars.

Challenge
Another level lacking in length with a fairly easy boss at the end. You'll need to pump up the game difficulty to get full mileage out of this.

Challenge Point tips
Ten on offer, nine before the boss and one after it. There are three CPs in the large puzzle room.

YODA SCORE
5



***Shadows of the Empire* has a lot to live up to. Everyone loves Star Wars – at the time it blew every other Science Fiction film away and set a new standard for special effects. Perhaps it was harsh to expect *Shadows of the Empire* to do that for video games, but still, that's what we were all hoping.**

And although full marks go for including a variety of different game styles over the ten levels, only two of them are anything approaching the innovation of *Mario 64*, *Mario Kart 64* or even *Pilotwings*. The rest are either passable *Doom/Tomb Raider* clones or just plain dodgy. I defy anyone to derive enjoyment from the Speeder Bike section in Mos Eisley.

But all this is slightly unfair. *Shadows* is still a fine game with some brilliant moments. The Challenge Points are an important addition. If you decide to play for them, they require a more thoughtful, measured approach rather than the rush through as-quickly-as-possible, lightweight PlayStation way of play. The rewards for collecting all the CPs are worthwhile: a mapping facility on 'Easy', new view and flying options on 'Medium', and, well I won't spoil the surprise on 'Hard' and 'Jedi'. Overall, therefore, *Shadows* provides a worthy amount of replay value.

If you're an enormous *Star Wars* fan, you'll want to consider *Shadows* as one of the first games you buy. If you're not so obsessed, it should be a little further down your list or maybe one to borrow from a friend. *Shadows* has been a near miss for LucasArts, but so far, all the outstanding N64 games have come from Nintendo themselves.

JAMES

7 VISUALS
The first and last levels are superb. Some of the rest are good. A sad few are awful.

8 SOUNDS
Not a John Williams score unfortunately but the (mono) sound effects are completely authentic.

5 MASTERY
The Challenge Points add a lot. Uncomfortably Doom-clone in places.

6 LIFESPAN
Good as long as you play it at 'Hard' or 'Jedi' difficulty settings. Far too easy otherwise.

VERDICT
Basically solid, but lacking the innovation and brilliance of Nintendo's other launch titles. Get Turok before you get this.

78%

The Beatles were right, you know. Being "Free As A Bird" is A Good Thing...



ON THE N64 VIDEO
SEE PAGE 16



Bringing *Pilotwings* to the mind-boggling delights of the N64 might have seemed like a strange decision to some, especially considering the way that the original divided opinion. However, just as the SNES game set the standard for Mode 7 feasts, so this refurbished follow-up has proven Nintendo's genius – with a hefty nod to Paradigm Simulations – in mastering their new machine.

Just as *Pilotwings* provides technical proof of the N64's awesome capabilities though, it also deserves credit for its game structure, style and content. In short, it's everything you've ever wanted from a flight sim...



PILOT 64



Pilotwings 64		
NINTENDO/PARADIGM		
(UK flag)	64M	1
~~Controller Pak back-up~~	On-cartridge back-up	Out now
£49.99		

WALKING ON AIR

Three main vehicles mean mucho airborne action and a fair sprinkling of try-as-you-fly. So, just how do you go about controlling these mechanical vixens...?

WALKING ON AIR HANG-GLIDER

Pfff. It looks easy enough – no fuel consumption to worry about, no tricky 'thrusting', no rotor to catch on nearby buildings – and in the very first levels you'll think you'll probably be able to waltz through the hang-glider sections. But, all too soon, it'll induce sporadic fist/N64 interfacing and the sort of language that, very certainly, your mother wouldn't approve of.

The reasons for its deceptiveness are obvious enough. After all, your glider just sort of floats about. However, what you soon discover is that, in order to achieve your set objectives, you need to make use of the thermals. These pockets of rising warm air are dotted about the islands and are the only way that you're able to gain height. Once you start making the dreaded descent it's almost impossible to start the climb back up again so, to maintain a constant height, you really need to hit these patches in the right order. Luckily, the thermals are not at all hard to spot as they appear in the air as a white cloud-like tube or an orange blob on your oh-so-useful radar.



Even including the thermals, you might still think the hang-glider sections sound easy. You'd still be wrong, though: even once you've grasped the fact that when you sway left you actually *turn* right, there's the problem of shifting about while flying and, more importantly, landing. Oh, certainly, landing. It's hard enough at the best of times but when you have to contend with cross winds as well it all turns into an absolute nightmare.

The mid-air start means you need to turn just a little to reach the thermal: tap at the joystick until you're on course. Never hold Down, unless you're trying to land: you'll lose direction immediately.

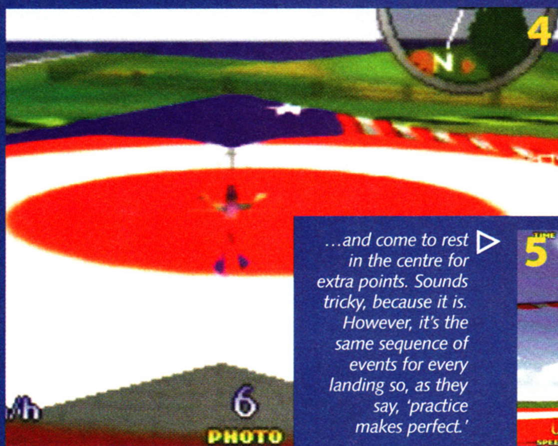


Once you've moved out of the height-giving thermals, you're on course for the landing pad. If you need to turn, tap at the stick, then lower yourself by pushing up. Pressing the A button allows you to lower your legs.



Moving through the circles shouldn't be much of a problem as they're all fairly close together. Naturally, they start to spread out as you progress through the game, but the same rules apply throughout.





Make sure you're doing around 70 Kmh on your descent and drop your legs once you're over the start of the landing pad. Your height should be between 10 and 20m. Your feet should then hit the outer ring...

...and come to rest in the centre for extra points. Sounds tricky, because it is. However, it's the same sequence of events for every landing so, as they say, 'practice makes perfect.'



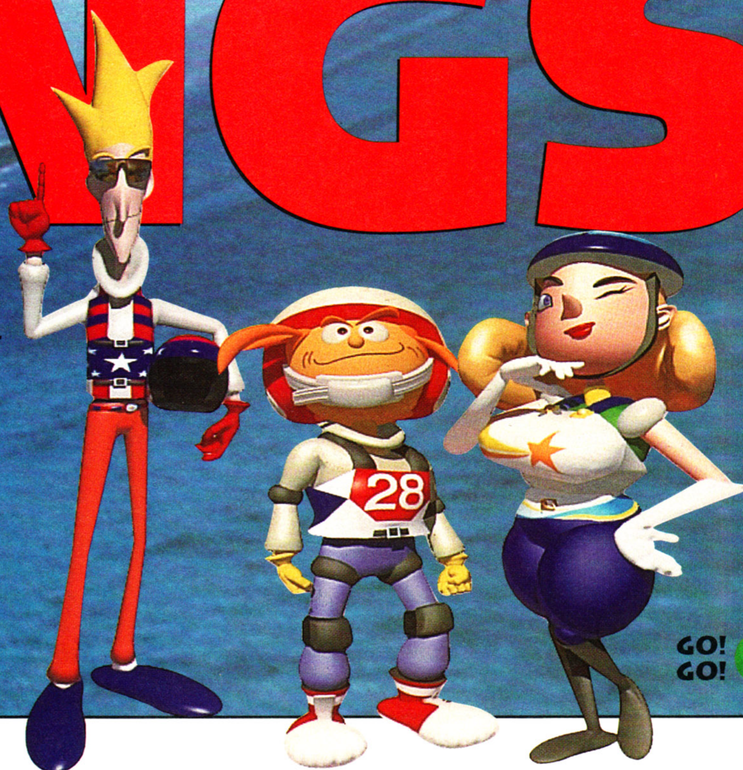
WINGS

PICKING PILOTS

The six pilots on offer – Lara, Kiwi, Goose, Ibis, Hawk and Robin – don't differ greatly except in their beautifully constructed costumes and aircraft...



In some quarters, the spindly sight of these airborne freaks had people criticising the lack of rendered muscle. However, their stick-thin necks and always-breakable legs provide a much-needed comedy element. Just watching them pile into a rock face is proof enough of that. Oh yes.



GO! GO!

WALKING ON AIR ROCKET BELT

Easily the most satisfying of the vehicles, the rocket belt merely needs directing. Forward, backward and upward pushes on the old analogue stick, unsurprisingly, send you hurtling in the appropriate directions. A tap of the unseen but beautifully useful Z trigger, meanwhile, will result in you stopping dead, whatever speed you happen to be doing. The only drawback here – because there MUST be one – being that this uses up terrifying amounts of fuel.

The rocket belt is far more controllable than the hang-glider, for example, because of the fact you can actually *choose* when to prevent yourself from ploughing into the side of a mountain at 190 kmh (as opposed to having to rely on the whims of the thermals). But, with the camera only ever behind you – unless you have a spare four fingers available and able to play about with the yellow camera buttons – it's difficult to know just how close you are to those dreaded vertical surfaces (for which you are deducted five points for hitting). The solution is to tap the Right shoulder button and switch to a top-down view. This – although considerably more challenging than the behind-the-character set-up – is an absolute godsend when it comes to precise airborne manoeuvring.

This city-based, circle-searching adventure is a prime example of how tricky the rocket belt is to master. Remember to use your map to find out exactly where the circles are situated. Good times are rewarded with high points scores.





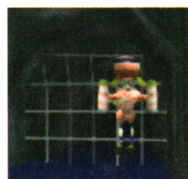
There are no real rules as to which circles to go for first, but you can throw your pilot around a bit without fear of being penalised. In the early stages of the game your fuel consumption isn't taken into consideration so, if you see fit, use the Z trigger to operate the brake flame.

Encountering cunningly-placed circles such as this one isn't so much of a problem if you switch to a top-down view. Use you belt to move forward and upwards should you not be in position and then, when you move over the top, drop downwards, remembering to use your upward flame after passing through the circle.





Once you've completed the business of the day, it's merely a question of landing, and that's about the easiest bit. Tap at your upward flame to move yourself onto the landing pad and then just drop your spindly legs softly into the red central loveliness for a plethora of points.



NIGHT SIGHT
If the cold light of day is a little too much to take on the first Rocket Belt level, then try this little tip for size. Make your way to the two waterfalls that lead onto the three-fountained pond. Its source should lead to a cave which, if you enter it, will be blocked at the far end by a metal grating. Don't fret, however, just get as far into the cave as possible. Before you touch the grating, you'll find yourself transported to the night version of the very same level you were playing before you entered the cave. Everything's still intact, including the balloons and the landing pad, it's just everything's now lovely and lit up.

ISLAND HOPPING

Pilotwings 64 **has four very different islands to explore. Here's a quick rundown...**

HOLIDAY ISLAND

Plenty of sun to be had as well as endless white beaches, hotels, lakes, parks and fun-for-all-the-family fairs. Aside from completion of the fairly simple first-level tasks at hand, Holiday Island offers up a feast of bucket-and-spade-type shenanigans. It's small but gorgeous and you can catch the rays, stuff yourself with ice cream or just take a gentle stroll. Were it not for the fact you're 200 metres up, of course.



EVER-FROST ISLAND

Things get a little more tricky with the blizzard-like beauty of Arctic Island. The gyrocopter's an easier proposition as you have some weight behind you, but get up to the peaks in your hang-glider or rocket belt and you'll find yourself being blown all over the shop. Still, there's much to admire in the scenic department on Arctic Island, with some gorgeous views and little Alpine towns dominating the lower reaches.



WALKING ON AIR GYROCOPTER



Take-off shouldn't trouble you, with 50 kph equating to airborne activity. Once you've achieved cloud-surround status you can let your finger off the A button, as this is now only used for acceleration purposes.



Switch to a first-person view, as this means easier targeting. You should be able to see the Rockman scuttling about on the horizon as soon as you start moving across the fields.



If you fancy your chances, try firing at him from a distance. Occasionally, he's dumb enough to walk back into the firing line after first moving out of the way, so you may strike lucky…



…But normally, however, you'll have to get up close – a task made harder when he lobs whacking great rocks at you. Some you can avoid, some you can't. For the latter you'll have to use your Z trigger missiles.



Now quickly lower yourself, all the time using B, and as you think you're going to hit the track, push Up on the analogue stick to allow for a smoother landing. Don't keep it pressed, however, as you'll take off again.

Controlling the gyrocopter is simplicity itself, thanks to the analogue stick's unique responsiveness. Perhaps because of this, it's by far the most exciting of the vehicles, with downward and upward dives accompanied by undercarriage missiles to be aimed and fired. Targets and Rockmen need to feel the full force of your firepower, while the traditional green circles need passing. Simple.

Except for the fact that the Rockman is an absolute sod to get rid of. He moves quickly (for a big man) all across America's middle or the Arctic's sea, so a cunning mixture of guesswork and exact aiming is what you'll need for victory. Predicting just where in damnation the lad's going to leg it off to next is half the fun, however, and hitting him results in the injured rock formation running off screaming. You have to hit the blighter with five missiles before you can finally swing round and try your hand at landing. And that's where the gyrocopter really cranks up the difficulty…





GAS STOP

On Little States Island, to refuel your gyrocopter or rocket belt, try flying along the northwest road from Cape Canaveral. A little way up, you'll see a small petrol station hiding out in the wilderness with a Paradigm logo on its top. Drop a little and slowly circle the station until you hear a taking-off sound. You can now rejoice at the sight of your petrol tank filling up again. Of course, your time



isn't reset, so you have to be quick about it, but you won't get penalised for lack of fuel in the final standings. Nice.

There's also another place to refuel on the same island, although it's a slightly



more tricky proposition. Find the town near the nuclear plant (towards the middle) where there should be a little station. This holds petrol, and by flying under its roof you'll reap the benefits of a gorgeous gathering of gasoline.

LITTLE STATES

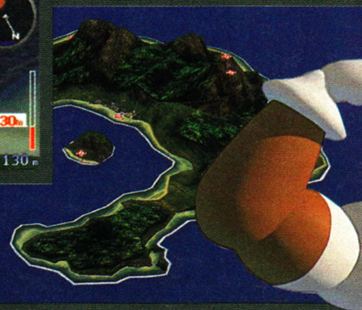
Ingenious, in that you can view the whole of the good ol'US of A in one go. All the famous landmarks are present – the Statue of Liberty, the Golden Gate Bridge, the Empire State Building, Cape Canaveral, the Grand Canyon, Mario carved into Mount Rushmore (eh?) – so if you ever fancied gandering away at our charming American cousins' handiwork work across the pond, here's your chance. It's all really rather splendid.

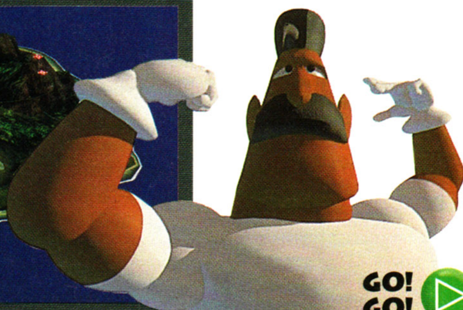


CRESCENT ISLAND

The last of the four islands is deceptively difficult to complete but that can't take anything away from the monstrous views on offer. If this was a real life island it would surely be somewhere like Barbados. Even though it's shaped more like the Isle of Wight than a West Indian island, its lush greenery, hills, beaches and crystal clear seas easily do the collective exotic business.







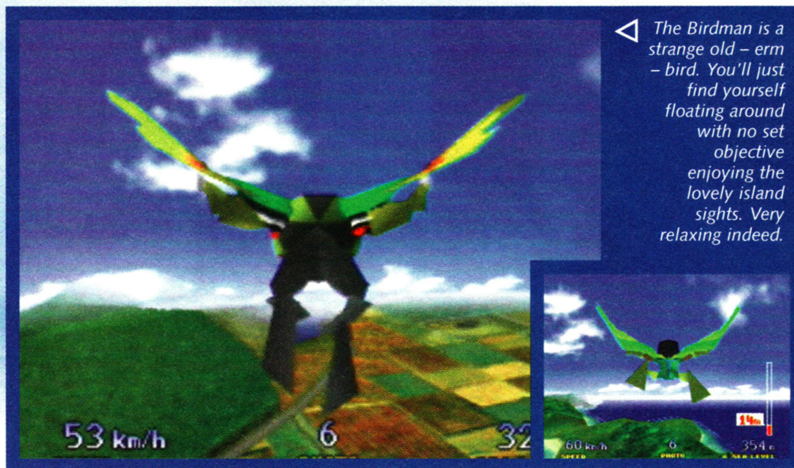


SECRET STUFF!

Once the main vehicles have been given a thorough seeing to, there's the all-too-inviting question of the secret flight modes to deal with…

SECRET STUFF! THE BIRDMAN

Not really anything too exciting, but a gentle introduction to winged flight. Use the A button to flap your wings and gain height, and the B button to land. There's little structure to the levels other than they give you the chance to explore the four islands at will. The Z trigger also acts as a camera, so you can take happy pictures of all the various landmarks – should you have the strange compulsion.



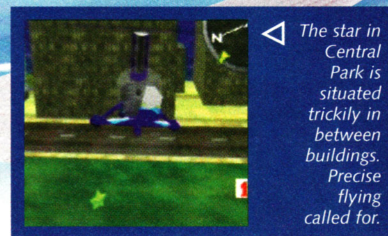
The Birdman is a strange old – erm – bird. You'll just find yourself floating around with no set objective enjoying the lovely island sights. Very relaxing indeed.



The Holiday Island star shouldn't prove too much of a problem.

STARS IN THE SKIES!

It's actually possible to access the Birdman level prior to pulling on the lycra in the secret levels. Dotted about the islands are four Birdman Stars which, once collected, whisk you away to the the secret game. You can pick up the stars using any of the initial vehicles.



The star in Central Park is situated trickily in between buildings. Precise flying called for.

HUMAN CANNONBALL
Here are all the angles you'll need to hit the bullseye (although some may need slight adjustments).
Key: V = Vertical, H = Horizontal, P = Power.

ROUND ONE

Cannon 1
V: 1-2°
H: W 50° N
P: Full

Cannon 2
V: 12°
H: S 70° W
P: Full

Cannon 3
V: 18°
H: W 30° N
P: Full

Cannon 4
V: 4°
H: S 87° W
P: Full

ROUND TWO

Cannon 1
V: 10°
H: S 65° W
P: Full

Cannon 2
V: 5°
H: S 12° W
P: 1/2

Cannon 3
V: 29°
H: W 28° N
P: Full

Cannon 4
V: 18°
H: E 49° S
P: 3/4

ROUND THREE

Cannon 1
V: 13°
H: E 23° S
P: Full

Cannon 2
V: 7°
H: S 85° W
P: Full

Cannon 3
V: 52°
H: S 41° W
P: Full

Cannon 4
V: 45°
H: E 54° S
P: Full (or maybe just a little less)

To call *Pilotwings* an acquired taste would be to miss the point. Plainly, it won't gain you friends at school. Nor will it have your work mates listening on intently as you recount the majesty of its landscapes or the splendour of the gyrocopter. What it will do is provide ample proof of the N64's potential and add much-needed validity to Nintendo's frequently-trumpeted claims about their Black Magic Box™. *Pilotwings 64,* you see, is a wondrous, tireless example of a game that combines superior technical achievement with endless, summer-long bouts of enjoyment. In short, it's everything Nintendo and their fans had hoped it would be.

If you've played the original Super Nintendo *Pilotwings*, you'll find that the changes rung throughout *Pilotwings 64* are numerous. Plainly, the visuals – designed and developed by States-based Paradigm Simulations – are the most obvious transformation, with the original's flat, Mode 7 environments replaced by stunning multi-levelled valleys, mountains and cities. Being able to swoop under a fly-over or soar above a snow-laden peak is jaw-dropping. At the top of the mountains you can hear running water and see textured snow, while in amongst the skyscrapers you can listen to the roar of car engines, and peer through the windows of buildings as you pass. The combined result is something easily as astounding in the eye-candy department as *Mario 64* itself.

Time has allowed for some development of the 'vehicles' as well. The original bi-plane has been shipped off to the scrapyard and replaced by an ultra-modern gyrocopter. You'll soon discover that this is able to take you as high or as low as you want at the merest twitch of the analogue stick (which, we might add, aids the game in no small way). The rocket belt has been re-invented as a space-age jet pack, resembling something more akin to Boba Fett and intergalactic space battles than a mid-1990s traipse across middle America. The sky-diving element has been relegated to secret status and, in fact, only the hang-glider remains intact, pretty much untouched by the four years passed since its original outing.

SECRETS

And, although the loss of a vehicle may seem cause to worry, any half-decent player will soon unearth a plentiful supply of hidden conveyances, including birdman wings, the chance to become a human cannonball, jumble hopper boots and the aforementioned updated sky-diving antics. But, before you even get close to discovering the unique delights of these, there are 36 main missions to be undertaken and completed.

These 36 main courses are divided across four islands: Holiday, Crescent, Little States and Arctic. Generally, the objectives behind each mission are to pass through as many floating green circles as possible. The number of circles to be passed naturally increases as you work your way through the game, and they soon tend to start cropping up between close-together buildings or under low bridges. Occasionally, things change with the odd mission asking you to rocket-belt around and burst blue and orange balls, or bounce giant beach balls into a tube in the side of a hill. And, although that might seem strange enough, the most amusing and bizarre feature comes in the form of a walking, running and rock/snowball-throwing rockman at whom you have to fire gyrocopter missiles. There are four different certificates to gain for each vehicle. The first, Novice, is a gentle introduction to the world of *Pilotwings 64* and isn't likely to spring too many surprises. The second, third and fourth – A, B and Professional – however, offer a richer menu of inch-perfect manoeuvring and sweaty-palmed preciseness. This is especially true of the last two, which should come with a free built-in swearword tutor and are more than enough to persuade of *Pilotwings 64's* formidable challenge.

Still, gain the necessary point scores for each of the three tasks and you're awarded either a bronze, silver or gold grade award. Garner the minimum of three silver medals and you earn the opportunity to do similar things with the the four certificates served up for the secret air-vessels.

HUMAN CANNONBALL SECRET STUFF!

A most amusing take on the old circus routine. It's simple enough in principle: get your degrees right, take aim, choose your power and fire at the target.

In practice, however, it's all a lot more difficult to grasp and complete. Some targets are carefully hidden away over mountain peaks or in valleys, meaning that you can't see your target and ensuring that at least your first couple of tries have to be complete guesswork. After you've sussed out where things are, it's a question of trial-and-error and maybe a little note-taking as well.



SKY-DIVING SECRET STUFF!

A tricky blighter this. The object is to match up your falling parachutist with the green silhouette in order to complete a formation with your colleagues. Once this has been achieved, you let go and your mates drop a little and reform, leaving you once again to fill in your silhouette. Once you've done this four times, you have to land. This bit is rather similar to the original's sky-diving sections. The A and B buttons act as a 'free fall' (speed-up) option and a brake, respectively.



JUMBLE HOPPER SECRET STUFF!

Here, a chestnut of the odd variety awaits you. It's springy soles a-plenty time with a seemingly ordinary pair of wellies offering skyscraper-high leaps into the clouds and cross-river jumps. The objectives behind the jumble hopper levels are hardly what you'd class as definite, the point presumably being to scale tall buildings in a single bound and charge through the air faster than a speeding bullet. Good fun for all that but, like the birdman levels, likely to do little more than soothe all those hang-glider-tense muscles.





△ *The jumble hoppers are doused in frolics with building-high jumps a-plenty.*

That, then, is the ABC workings of *Pilotwings 64*, but just how exactly does it feel to play? Well, as difficult as it is to convey in words, nothing short of astounding. Nintendo's 'secret weapon', the analogue controller, works wonders in the game. The control is nigh-on perfect, with the stick nestling lovingly under your thumb. Just as Ninty promised, a little push to the left actually results in a little *movement* to the left. Forget cumbersome D-pads, nothing less will be expected in subsequent games.

ACCURATE

The in-air movement of the vehicles is so accurate that, after concentrated play, you actually take for granted the fact that your gyrocopter swoops and your hang-glider suffers in high winds. Although, infrequently, slow-down occurs – passing over the launching shuttle at Cape Canaveral on the Little States Island, for example – it isn't enough to shatter your belief that you are actually 400 metres up in the air, and that right below you are the icy jaws of a mountain.

True, there are little faults that will nag at the less patient of players. The scoring system, for example, seems to lack consistency, with solid performances often inexplicably turning out low scores. The criteria for doing well isn't ever made clear, even though each score is broken down into categories. After a while, you learn to mute your celebrations until the final scores are announced.



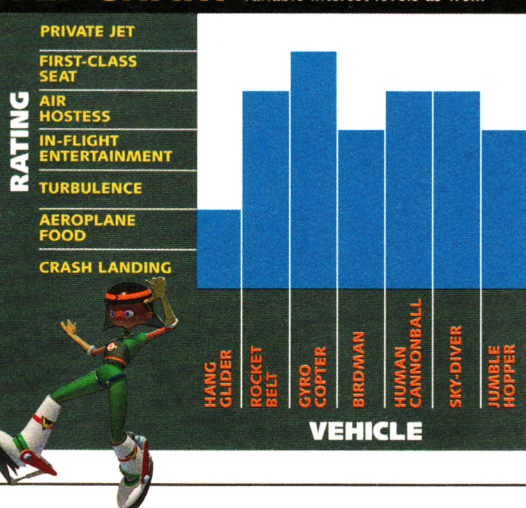
◁ *The completed game. However, don't be fooled into thinking it's easy.*

But, for that, this is eminently playable stuff. The technical advance made by *Pilotwings 64* over the original is tenfold (at least) and, although it would have benefited from a two-player mode, it's easily more enjoyable. Just as *Mario 64* has succeeded in keeping the best of its NES and SNES ancestry and bettering the originals, so too has *Pilotwings*. It may not *look* exciting but – damn it – it plays like a dream.

TIM

FLY CHART

Plenty of variety in *PW64* with variable interest levels as well.





IT'S A ME... WARIO!

On the very first human cannonball level, you'll find yourself firing your character in the direction of a Mario-carved Mount Rushmore. If you can get your angles right, however, you could change the face on the rock into Mazza's arch-rival Wario.



Switch to an in-cannon view and then adjust your degree settings to V: 12°; H: W 47° N and P: Full...





9 VISUALS
Stunning throughout. Equalled, thus far, only by *Mario*.

8 SOUNDS
Some beautifully accurate FX and funky '70s porno music.

8 MASTERY
Thoroughly makes us of the N64's power. Frighteningly impressive.

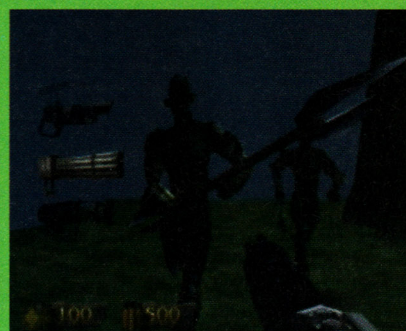
9 LIFESPAN
Consistently delights, and has one hell of a difficulty curve.

VERDICT
Pilotwings 64 is a breathtaking showcase for the N64. What Nintendo promised, they have delivered. Superb.

89%



If you're this close, you're probably in trouble. Still, it's nothing that a TeK Arrow won't sort out. Hopefully.



These guys don't just shamble up to you like in Doom or Quake, they run. Fast.



TUROK DINOSAUR

Heavy with weapons, inhabited by dinosaurs and drowned in blood, the first-person shooter takes a turn for the prehistoric in Acclaim's fantastic new blaster...

Turok: Dinosaur Hunter		
ACCLAIM		
UK	128M	1
Controller Pak back-up	~~Cartridge back-up~~	Out now
£69.95		





HUNTER



Taking enemies out at distance has to be the best tactic. You get to watch the pretty pyrotechnics that way as well.

Taking their very own comic book hero, Turok, and utilising his muscular Indian hide in their first N64 title was a risky piece of manoeuvring by Acclaim. Plainly, here in beautiful Blighty, Native Americans begin and end with Tonto. And in Japan, Shoenjump still fills every shelf in Tokyo comic stores. Only America has experienced any kind of relationship with the time-travelling Indian, and even there, having initially sold by the truck-load he then strangely wasted away.

However, on playing *Turok* it becomes abundantly clear he offers massive scope for entertainment. And work your way through Iguana's formidable programming achievement and you'll realise that the N64's first third-party title easily displaces the theory that only Nintendo can develop successfully for their machine.

Taking on the role of the dark-of-skin time-traverser, you're required to hunt and scarper your way through eight levels each split into separate 'lands'. Your task is to search out the various pieces of the Chronosceptor, an alien weapon of awesome power, and defeat The Campaigner. He's a psychotic and similarly time-conscious nasty who plans to unleash his army of Bionosaurs upon the world at various points in history. But that's by the way.

All of which should provide ample-enough foundations for the finest *Doom*-style jaunt since, well, *Doom*. And, taking in every

GO! GO!



DISCO 2000 BC!
The sight of various psychopaths copping it like a good 'un never becomes grating in *Turok*. However, there's no denying that the carnage involved in this particular bout of dinosaur hunting doesn't half prove bloody. So, if you're looking for something to lighten up proceedings a bit, you can't go wrong with the Disco Mode.

Yep, by simply typing in SNFFRR at the 'Enter Cheat' menu option, you'll be treated to some truly spanking Travolta-like moves. Every blighter – from the Hulks to the Triceratops – enjoys a bit of dancing and, bless them, they go for it. Still, if the sight of a foot soldier "shaking his bits to the hits" proves a little too much, you can easily dispatch them – during their hugely enjoyable bouts of funksome jigging, they tend not to notice anyone else, especially not Indian's with strapping great rocket launchers.







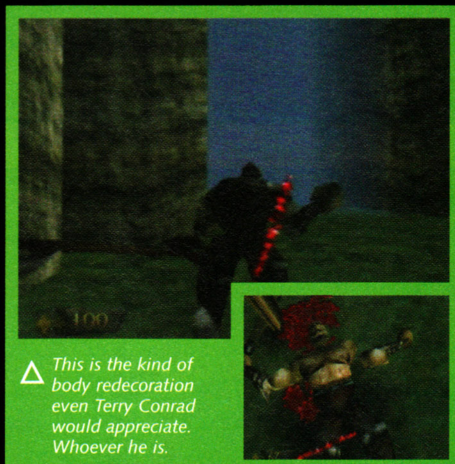
PERFECT WEAPON

Turok excels partly through its weapons, with their aftermaths almost as jaw-dropping as their size. So, here for your weeping eyes, are the whole cast – from start to finish and then through to the Chronosceptor's encore...

PERFECT WEAPON KNIFE

In the misty swamp lands of the first level, the knife will prove invaluable. The scab-ridden foot soldiers are more spread out than in later levels. So, in between some welcome blood-soaked combat, there's plenty of time to get to grips with the workings of *Turok's* most natural hand-filler.

Unfortunately, you're going to have to get up close to an enemy if you're to have any chance of slashing them. Catch them across the chest or around the neck area and they'll be begging you to spare them. Which, of course, you won't. And if you're not sure of their current state of health, when they're on the ground, give them a couple of extra slashes.



This is the kind of body redecoration even Terry Conrad would appreciate. Whoever he is.



PERFECT WEAPON BOW AND ARROW

Along with the knife, the Bow and Arrow is selectable from the start. But, although it's Turok's traditional form of battle-fare, it's absolutely bugger all use in the heat of the jungle. Against your human adversaries it will take at least eight or nine blows to do anything resembling damage, and up against the scale-skinned, halitosis-beset beasts of the land it will act as nothing more than arm exercise.

Unless, that is, you manage to pick up some Tek Arrows. These are a more potent force, offering up a delectable menu of explosions, causing the area around the unfortunate victim will erupt into a blue flame, killing off the Raptors with one blow and the Geoff-Capes-o-saurs in a couple of well-timed shots.

Pretty to look at but you'll be back to the pistol pretty quickly.

PERFECT WEAPON PISTOL

Your first opportunity to properly assert your authority comes when you gain control of one of these priceless little beauties. It certainly isn't the most powerful weapon around but it's a damn sight better than either the Knife or the Bow and Arrow and it'll enable you to polish off the Campaigner's brain-washed gun freaks without having to get too close to their pig ugly faces.

Aiming the gun will prove initially tricky – seeing that you have to come to terms with the yellow button/analogue stick movement equation, first – but once you're sure of yourself you won't fear pelting it into an enemy-infested area and trying your luck. The results of the Pistol's firepower aren't extraordinary but you can easily riddle the legs, arms and chests of the soldiers and leer disturbingly at the bloody aftermath.

Be that as it may, fancying your chances against the milkfloat-sized Dimetrodons pistol-only certainly wouldn't be a well-considered act.



Come and taste my bullets of death, Godzuki.



Shameless aggression. My hormones are on fire.

Prehistoric holiday spot they could lay their Midas-like hands on, Iguana have built just that. Indeed, after sweating, screaming and streaking your way through this, literally, monstrous adventure, you'll realise that the only game that could better *Turok* in the first-person shooter stakes is *Doom 64* itself.

Control over Turok is unlike anything previously accessible on a pad. The yellow buttons – normally reserved by N64 titles for view changes – control your direction, whilst the analogue stick changes the view. This can allow Turok to gaze upward and downward and left to right, just like in PC games such as *Quake* and *Terminator: Future Shock*. The idea of moving your head separately to your body will seem a strange one to gamesplayers brought up on a more simple 'D-pad equals direction' scheme of things, but it soon becomes second nature. Once you have control over your bodily functions, dealing with your extensive arsenal becomes essential.

The weapons in *Turok* are quite fantastic. Even the simpler firepower – such as the Automatic Shotgun or Chaingun – surpasses much of what has been churned out in the time since *Doom*. Using A, you can scroll through your collected weapons and then, once selected, you can fire off rounds of ammunition via Z. Easy to get to grips with, certainly, but aiming and knowing the effectiveness of your weapon is a separate learning process altogether.

Quite how *Turok* will be received by the British censors, though, is another thing. The weapons are so brilliantly thought-out and their effects so consistently devastating that enemies have little choice than to find themselves being blown fifty feet into the air trailing blood in their wake. And once you have in your possession the Grenade Launcher or Particle Accelerator, you can set about The Campaigner's assorted groupies with a horrifying amount of force. Needless to say, it's supremely entertaining.

Technically, *Turok* has been criticised, particularly in its use of the mist effects to mask clipping. It does work well for the game, nevertheless, piling on the tension – especially when first a silhouette appears

PERFECT WEAPON ASSAULT RIFLE

Taking the mountainous step from the Pistol to the rapid-fire Assault Rifle will take some getting used to. Whereas with the single-barrelled, gun equivalent of Hull City, you had to bide your time and throw a slice of strategy pie into proceedings, the rifle doesn't require too much thought. It feels a little lightweight, but its effects can be some well-timed carnage.

Just watch, for example, as enemies leg it towards you and you let loose a small burst of lead-friendly smog. The small flower-like bud of flame certainly isn't impressive, but once your bullets hit home, you'll rejoice at the fact that their bodies are forced by the sheer volume of fire. For ease of use, it's hard to beat but most tellingly of all, you *will* return to use it, even when you have the bigger, more powerful weapons at your disposal.







Shoot a Raptor and he'll rear-up realistically. That's 'realistically' in the 'we're actually guessing' sense.

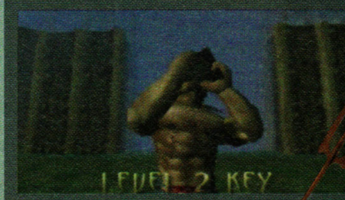
The assault rifle has a habit of spraying enemies blood against the walls. Which is nice.

KEY TO THE KINGDOM

In order to complete each level, you need to collect a number of keys which will eventually open the end-of-level warp. Situated within the confines of some fine-fettled mini monuments, the keys are generally placed equal distances apart – although not necessarily in the same sort of areas. Thus, exploration is a vital part of proceedings with every inch of grassland and concrete needing to be scanned.

Miss a key and you severely dent your chances of making the blood-swamped delights of the next level. Step into the time porthole, though, and you'll find yourself gradually filling out each Stargate-like capsule. Eventually, once all the portals are quivering with blue liquid, you can access the last level – catchily titled, "The Final Confrontation" – which resides in the centre of the monument and drops downwards as if, yes, you're descending into the deepest reaches of Hell...





As everyone knows, portals are blue. Warps are green but portals are blue. IT'S A BASIC VIDEO GAME FACT! Tch.

followed milli-seconds later by a fully formed enemy. Yes, it's over-used, but the scenery – incorporating everything from sweeping underwater canyons to claustrophobic, more traditional cavern corridors – is of such a constantly high standard that you tend not to notice. Much of the time it's the little touches that you notice most, such as the sun, above you, peering through the vast clouds and flaring of the game's 'camera'.

The game as a whole simply oozes atmosphere, and is aided by some cleverly-paced puzzles. Thankfully, at no time do you feel lost or hopelessly devoid of direction. Save points – for which a Controller Pak is essential, unfortunately – are located a way apart, but not so much that you start to lose faith in your quest. But, most of all, it's the sheer scale of *Turok* that impresses. From the *Braveheart*-style size of The Campaigner's army to the end-of-level bosses (which grace four of the eight levels), this game will keep you entranced for weeks on end. Every pore seeps quality, and if *Doom 64* can better this then you can rest assured the N64 has the two best first-person shoot-'em ups on any format. Quite brilliant.

TIM



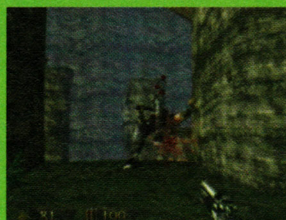
GO! GO!



PERFECT WEAPON SHOTGUN

Looking and feeling like something that Beauford T Justice would be mighty proud of, this classic Deep South sheriff favourite will have enemy troops running scared. However, despite it being a blatantly powerful young rascal – with kickback the size of Greenland – it's a slow old thing to reload. Unfortunately, in the heat of battle, that can result in unnecessary dino smacks to your person.

Still, there's no denying it's useful when attempting to polish off the larger nasties, and its results can be fantastically bloody. For each dinosaur it will take a number of shots before you're rid of their phlegm-drenched mouths but, manage to pick up some explosive shells – red as opposed to green – and you'll be whistling Sweet Dixie all the way home. Explosive shells are the key to succeeding with the Shotgun, taking out Raptors in a single shot and the Dimetrodons in several well-



If you see a dinosaur in real life, please don't treat it like this. Run away, certainly, but don't shoot him, he's probably as scared as you.

PERFECT WEAPON AUTOMATIC SHOTGUN



The chances of you persisting with the Roscoe P Coltrane grizzle-gun once you've scarpered into the jungle with this, the Automatic variety, is slim. This possesses everything the pump-action shotgun does plus a whole wheelbarrow more.

Most importantly, it has an automatic reload on it so you can fire away at an approaching target without having to pause for thought. This tasty piece of kit is blatant nod in *Doom's* direction, with its hefty mid-section and sleek barrel. And, just as with the shotgun, you'll be laughing all the way to The Campaigner if you come across some explosive shells. The added bonus with this is its relative rapidity of fire. Swinging round and meeting the jaws of some hunger-panged Jurrasic bleeder suddenly won't seem half as daunting with a full clip in this baby.

EVIL CHEATER!

There are some fairly comprehensive cheats available already for *Turok*. If you don't want to be tempted by them please stop reading this column right now.

If you're still here, don't say we didn't warn you.

Infinite Lives
FRTHSTHTTRLSCK

Gallery
THBST

Show Credits
FDTHMGS

Sprit Mode
THSSLKSCL

All Weapons
CMGTSMMGGTS

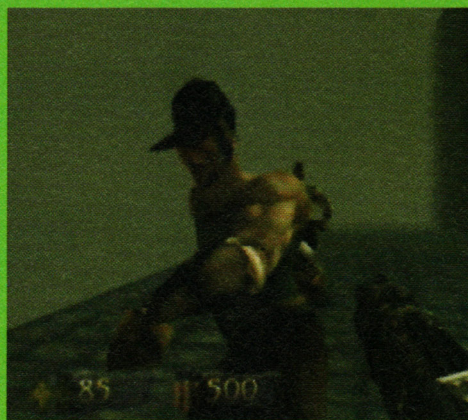
Unlimited Ammo
BLLTSRRFND

PERFECT WEAPON CHAINGUN

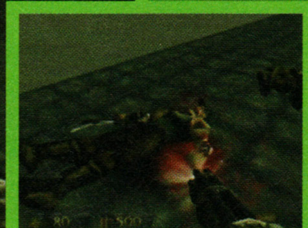
For all the fun of the Automatic Shotgun, it's not until you're able to harness the weighty mechanised purr of the Chaingun that Turok's bullet-driven weapons really come into their own. The previous entries are competent-enough firearms, but the predatory six-barrelled, leaden tidal wave emitter that is the Chaingun will have you wondering just how you scraped through the first third of the game.

It can finish off unsuspecting dinosaurs with consummate ease, while more human enemies tend not to know what's hit them when they trundle on into your line of fire. The beauty of this thing is that, even after you've stopped firing, it continues to revolve, gradually slowing down into a halt with a metal-against-metal whirr. Naturally, it packs a significant punch, although its heavier body means it'll slow you up slightly and make death-defying jumps all the more difficult to pull off.

The Chain gun DOES NOT fire chains. Just thought we ought to clear that up immediately.







PERFECT WEAPON GRENADE LAUNCHER



It'll feel like Christmas has come early when, on the Tree Top Village level, you spot the Grenade Launcher sitting casually on a cliff ledge. At first it'll probably seem slightly frightening and random in its fire, with the grenades bouncing about like rubber balls until they explode.

Soon, however, being able to predict when and where the grenades are going to blow up becomes second nature. Sending a couple or three soaring up into an elevated rock alcove and then watching the falling hundreds of feet to their death (complete with trailing blood, naturally) has to be nigh-on unbeatable in the feel-good department.

The Launcher is also the first weapon that will take out scenery as well as the living, moving things around them. The Tree Top section offers a lot of eco-unfriendly fun as you opt for a secondary career in tropical hardwoods.





◁ *Line up your enemy from a nice long way off, hit the fire button and enjoy the results in comfortable safety. That's what we like.*

PERFECT WEAPON PULSE RIFLE

Hissing like a rattle snake, the Pulse Rifle is the natural successor to the Grenade Launcher. Whereas said bomb-firer yields the ultimate in gunpowder action, the Pulse Rifle provides an enviable opportunity to grapple with an all-new alien weapon.

However, although it's undoubtedly pretty to watch, the Pulse Rifle is a surprisingly lightweight gift from another planet (perhaps that's why they left it lying around). The Pulse Rifle lacks the overall savagery of the Grenade Launcher and, indeed, the Chaingun.

Two things that it has got going for it though are speed and accuracy. It's a lot easier to aim than a lot of the other weapons, especially at distance. Whilst the lack of a bloody aftermath won't make it everyone's favourite, it's a good weapon to switch to when your Gran's paying too much attention for comfort.

PERFECT WEAPON MINI GUN

Truly defying its name, the Mini Gun is the first of three weapons that, when selected, opens up like a particularly pleasing birthday present. Splitting apart at the front, the Mini Gun absolutely and unflinchingly lives up to its billing as an alien weapon. The contents of its extensive steel bowels are blindingly powerful green lasers which deal more than adequately with the frail flesh-and-bone bodies of your foes.

It's a heavy piece of kit for sure but, pleasantly, it's hugely accurate and consumes your prey in a blanket of green light, frying their weedy shapes like a Berni Inn special. The pace of the lasers are also quite astounding, travelling as they do from the tip of the barrel to whoever may be in the way in a mere matter of nanoseconds. It's ideal for outdoor pursuits, but may prove a little overwhelming in corridors as it fills the dank squalors with horrifying amounts of light, obscuring the next wave of corpse-u-likes. Still, it improves on the Pulse Rifle tenfold, and proves vital armoury against those dastardly end-of-level bosses.





PERFECT WEAPON QUAD ROCKET LAUNCHER

Taking a well-earned rest from the excitable rigours of the laser-fed weapons, the Quad Rocket Launcher gets back to basics with a four-way path of destruction. The missiles contained within the svelte undergrowth of the Rocket Launcher are feisty to say the least, swirling off towards their prey in a cloud of grey smoke and exploding – on impact – into a carpet of orange fire.

The accuracy of the missiles is, unfortunately, questionable and, if you're being attacked on all sides by evil adversaries, you won't find a slower weapon to reload. But its effects are quite wondrous and will, no doubt, prove invaluable against the hulking masses that are the bosses.

Once again there's a pleasing metallic whirr as the weapon powers up, with the front sliding open and the body slipping apart to reveal the red and white beauty of the Quad's arrows of death. Hitting an unsuspecting rival can also result in the pleasing-to-the-eye spectacle of bodies flying into orbit. Nice.





△ *An unsuspecting enemy wanders up. You power up the Rocket Launcher and…*

△ *… let fly. There may be a corpse left at the end of it all but you'll have to look hard.*

PEN AND INK MODE

If you're interested in the whys and wherefores of game development, then tapping in DLKTDR at the Cheat Menu, will present you with the opportunity to see *Turok* as it was in its very earliest stages.

The Pen and Ink Mode turns the whole game into a set of untextured wireframes and also gives Iguana's game away somewhat. The pop-up in this fogless version is just slightly suspect and, without the eerie mist, rock faces and temples jump out of nowhere. Still, as long as it doesn't happen in the game proper, eh?

GO! GO! ▷

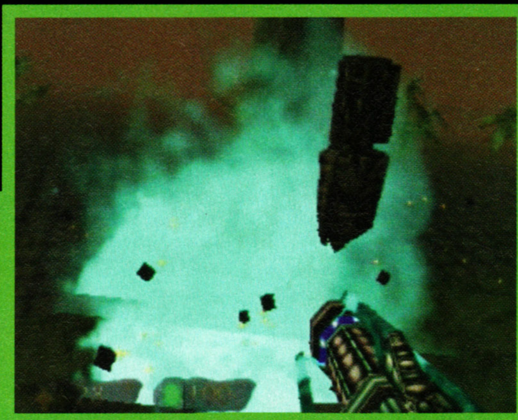
PERFECT WEAPON PARTICLE ACCELERATOR

The first of the three 'charging' weapons is a blistering piece of alien kit. It's heavy, like most of the later weapons, and isn't easy to lug around in the perspiration-inducing jungles and mountains but it can produce some overwhelming results.

Hold down Z for a few seconds and watch the ice-cool beast charge up. Then marvel at its release – a streak of blue lightning which engulfs your antagonist and freezes him to the spot. That is, of course, not all. Wait a few seconds and their frostbitten shapes will shiver and shatter into a million pieces.

As with all the later weapons, the Particle Accelerator is best fired from a distance as being too close to the action will result in you having half your energy whipped out from under you. However, with this stunning little mayhem-maker sometimes you won't even mind.







△ *The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Committee will have a word to say about this one. No they won't – it's not real. Phew!*

PERFECT WEAPON FUSION CANNON

Whereas your previous weapons may well have been able to deal well enough with the legions of living and breathing, this, the world's very first Chernobyl-on-a-stick, can wipe out whole villages in one go. Forget nuclear fall-out and radiation, that doesn't even enter the equation.

Charge up this portion of nuclear pudding and then just sit back and watch as its beam of red horror shoots into the distance, disappears, rumbles, then sends earth-shattering plumes of yellow smoke and, more impressively, shockwaves back towards you. The whole process takes a fair while but nothing is likely to attack you afterwards as you've just wiped out every living thing in a half-mile radius.

Due to the stupefying amount of carnage the Fusion Cannon creates, you'll only be given two shots at any one time. So, however tempting letting one go is, it's probably best to bide your time until you meet one of the formidable bosses.

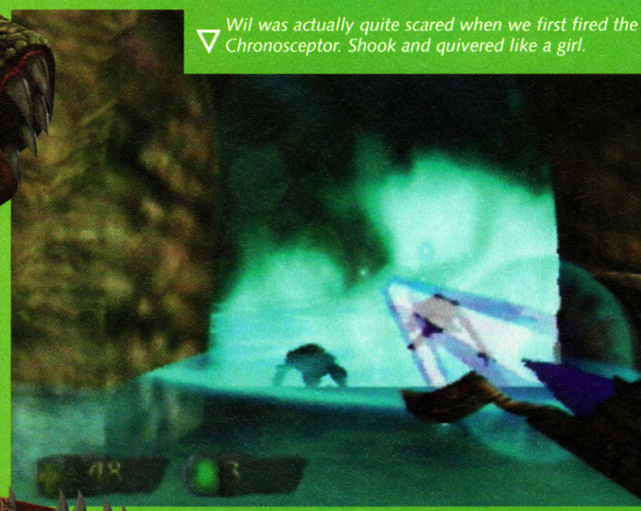
PERFECT WEAPON CHRONOSCEPTOR

Once you traversed the eight levels and collected all eight pieces of the Chronosceptor, you can take to it with some glue and papier maché and try your hand at *Turok's* ultimate weapon. Its phenomenal, wandering destructive powers are unmatched by anything else available to you previously (although the Fusion Cannon does come close).

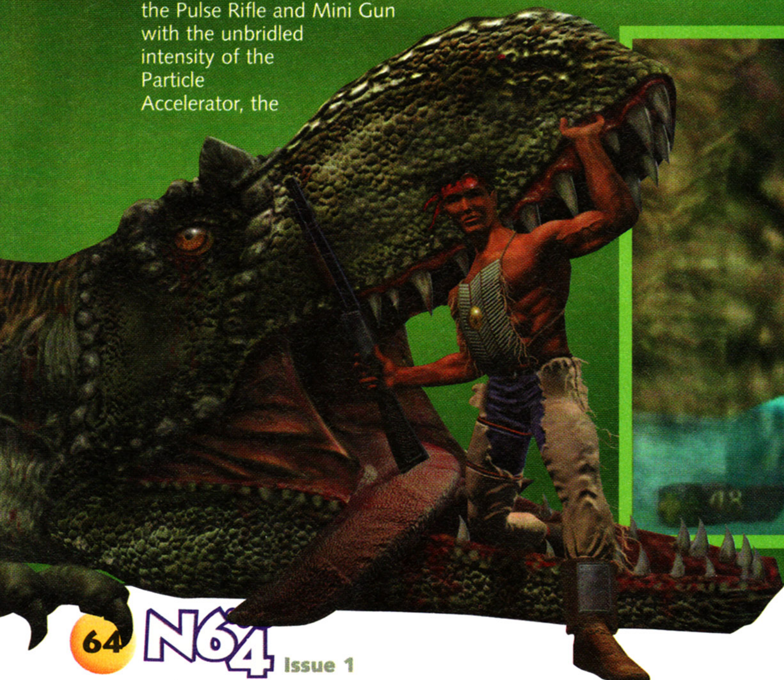
Merging the colour and pace of the Pulse Rifle and Mini Gun with the unbridled intensity of the Particle Accelerator, the Chronosceptor triples the damage potential of the whole damn caboodle.

The Chronosceptor needs a ludicrous amount of charging but the longer you hold it, the more powerful the streak of blue butchery when it finally whips into the distance. It will completely abolishe everything (and we're talking forests and settlements, here), so use it with care.





▽ *Wil was actually quite scared when we first fired the Chronosceptor. Shook and quivered like a girl.*



VISUALS 8
Possibly overdoses on mist, but otherwise Turok's universe is lushly recreated.

SOUNDS 8
A great tom-tom drum-led soundtrack and brilliantly accurate sound effects.

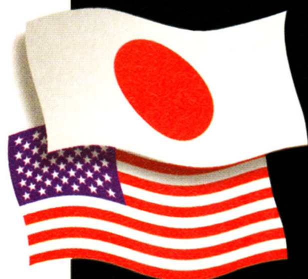
MASTERY 9
Perhaps only Nintendo themselves have used the N64 to such devastating effect.

LIFESPAN 9
Huge, rewarding levels and breathtaking weaponry will easily maintain interest.

VERDICT
Stunningly created by Iguana, *Turok* breaths new life into a tired old genre. Ludicrously violent, marvellously entertaining and another fantastic edition to the N64's growing library.

91%

TO BE CONTINUED... You'd like a complete *Turok* guide, wouldn't you. It's in the next issue.



From this page on, every game reviewed in **N64** is only available on Japanese and US import. We'll do more in future issues on any that're released in the UK.

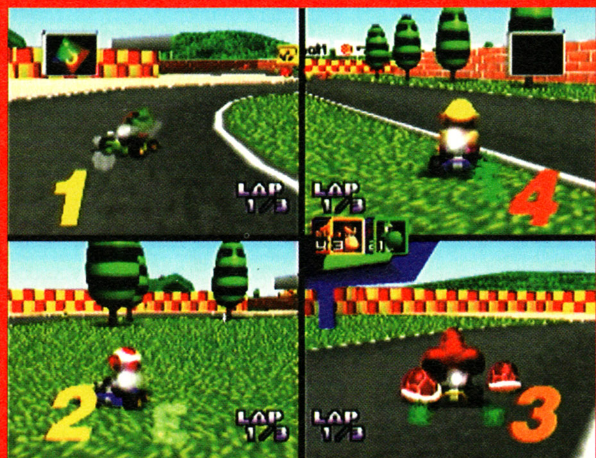
IMPORT ARENA



Though they're still sprites, rather than solid 3D models, Mario and his karting chums are far more detailed and miles better animated than their SNES forebears. You'll rarely spot any chunkiness.



Each character has his own cry of victory and groan of complaint. Listen for Wario's "Thankyouverymuch." Mario's moustache, meanwhile, seems to have little effect on his ability to win races.



The split-screen four-player mode is almost inconceivably entertaining. You'll need four controllers of course – tricky at today's prices – and, ideally, a massive telly.





MARIO KART 64

Mario Kart 64		
NINTENDO		
	96M	1-4
Controller Pak back-up	On cartridge back-up	Out now UK release June
¥9800 (Approx £50)		

Mario and his pals won't be karting into the UK until June. Unable to contain ourselves, we rounded them up on Japanese import.





COURSES

Mario Kart 64's 16 main courses are divided into four cups of four courses each. In Grand Prix mode you can tackle the cups in any order, and progress from one race to the next by crossing the finish line in at least fourth place. A Formula 1-style points system operates through the cup – nine points for first, six for second, three for third and one for fourth – and cups are awarded at the end for the top three. This works brilliantly, as you have to keep an eye on your championship rivals, hurling shells and bananas at them at every opportunity.

Courses KINOPIO CUP



Luigi Circuit
Constructed in honour of Mario's thinner brother, this loose B-shaped course requires you to negotiate subtle curves rather than tight twists. A hot-air balloon circles above as you gradually hone your analogue joystick skills.



Moh Moh Farm
On the face of it, just a simple loop around a dusty farm track, with some lovable-looking cows peering over the fence. Legend speaks, however, of a huge shortcut leading, we suspect, over the bridges. Let us know if you find it.

SPEED START!
Depending on when you press the accelerator on the starting grid, you can get off to a brisker start, just like in *Super Mario Kart*. This is an essential skill for the Time Attack mode. The precise technique seems to vary according to personal preference, though: James favours tapping A as each of the two red lights come on and then holding it when the blue light comes on, while Jonathan prefers simply to press and hold the button precisely for the arrival of the blue light. Experiment, we should.



MIRROR MODE!
If you win gold on all the cups in 150cc mode, you'll be given a special mode in which all the tracks are flipped left-to-right. Most terrifying is the Kinopio Highway course, where all the traffic now comes at you head-on. Nothing special seems to happen if you get gold on all the new cups, though, except the credits at the end change from English to Japanese. Hrmph.



DRIVERS

The original SNES *Super Mario Kart* line-up are all present and correct in the sequel, apart from Koopa Trooper's who's been replaced by the even eviller Wario.

Mario and Luigi

As in *Super Mario Kart*, Mario and his slimmer brother are the standard, middle-of-the-road all-rounders. Everything about them is 'average' – speed, acceleration and handling – making them good choices if you're new to the game. *Mario Kart's* designer, Shigeru Miyamoto, says he tends to pick Mario when he's playing because he's the character selected if you just keep pressing the A button all through the options screens. And if Mario's good enough for Shigs, he's good enough for us.





Yoshi, Princess Daisy and Toad

If you like your karts lightweight and nippy, you'll love these three. They've got the best acceleration – particularly handy if you're prone to crashing – and grip the road like chewing gum. They can also turn on a sixpence, allowing them to negotiate even the twistiest tracks with ease. The penalty, however, is top speed, their lack of which means they tend to get overtaken on long, flat-out straights. Being weedy, they're also easily batted off course by bruisers like Kong and Bowser. To compensate, they're not bogged-down too much by being taken off-road, making them good for short-cuts. Probably the best characters to pick for decent Time Attack times.

Donkey Kong, Wario and Koopa

These fellows are, without a doubt, the fastest on the track. However, in compliance with the Ineffable Laws of Video Games, the trade-off is they have the worst handling. Because they're so grossly overweight, it's a real effort to heave them around and through the tightest bends, and there are some corners, like the wiggly bit near the end of the Peach Circuit, that they simply can't manage at all. To make matters worse, they slow down rapidly if you run them off onto the grass or verge, and then take an agonising age to get back up to speed again. They redeem themselves entirely, though, by being able to barge past lighter characters – use a turbo-start from the back of the grid at the beginning of the race and they'll send all the other karts flying. They are, therefore, our characters of choice for the Grand Prix mode, particularly Kong, whom we hold in special esteem.





Noko Noko Beach
Zoom around the perimeter of a small island, grabbing power-ups positioned above ramps. There's a large lump of rock in the shape of a turtle, and an excellent short-cut that takes you through a long tunnel and out through a waterfall.



Kara Kara Desert
As you circumnavigate the desert mountains, an antique American steam train trundles around on its loop of track. Fine, except the road and the track intersect at a couple of points – with hilarious consequences.

Courses FLOWER CUP



Kinopio Highway
One of the most fearsome tracks of all, Mario and his pals must race along a busy motorway, weaving between the wheels of giant trucks and buses as they blow their horns angrily. Power-ups are tucked away in lay-bys.



Frappe Snowland
A straightforward race through some frozen wastes. The only sources of trouble are some particularly resiliant snowmen.

Choco Mountain
Not *Mario Kart 64's* most attractive-looking circuit.

Mario Circuit
The Circuit of Champions – or, at least, those wanting to try their hand at Nintendo of Japan's Time Attack championship. There are some tricky double-apex bends and plenty of opportunities for clipping corners.



AVOID BANANAS!
Stab the brake just after running straight over a banana and you won't spin.

BEST TIME!
You can display your best Mario Circuit Time Attack time by pressing R on the title screen. Hurrah!



RACE NINTENDO!
There are CPU-controlled ghosts of Luigi, Mario and Peach, which can be accessed by getting good times on their respective circuits in Time Attack mode. You'll need around 1'52" on Luigi Circuit, 1'30" on Mario Circuit, and 2'40" on Peach Circuit.



KART TO KART

Up to four can play at *Mario Kart 64*, although not in all the modes.



1 *1-Player Mario Kart 64 is great, although the CPU-controlled karts cheat a bit.*

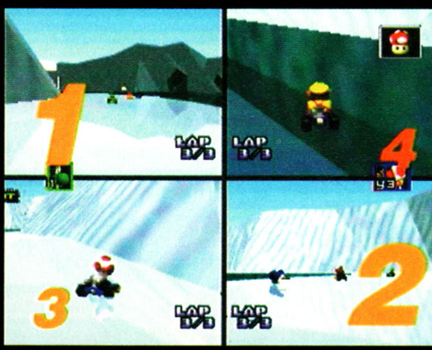
2 *2-Player Mario Kart 64 is even better, with the added bonus of the Battle Game.*



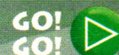


3 *3-Player Mario Kart 64 is, well, a bit loony. The CPU players vanish at this point, replaced by wheeled bombs. Nice!*

4 *4-player Mario Kart 64, meanwhile, is like nothing else experienced in mankind's history.*



GO! GO!



DRIFT CORNERING
If you ever want to join the higher echelons of the *Mario Kart* champions, it's vital that you master drift cornering. This is achieved by pressing and holding R along with the accelerator as you go into a long bend. You'll find yourself sliding sideways around the corner, and the smoke from your tyres will form letters – first Vs, then Es. Then, as you gently waggle the stick to hold yourself on course, you'll find the smoke turning yellow and, eventually, red. Release the accelerator at this point and you'll get a handy boost out of the corner.



Courses SPECIAL CUP

Koopa Castle
The course of nightmares: every bend's a right angle, with narrow doorways to slide through and lava to dissolve the unwary. Worst of all, the Thwomps from *Super Mario Kart* are back, and more eager to squash you than ever.





Peach Circuit
The Princess's own circuit, and you can actually drive around the outside of her castle, just as it is at the beginning of *Super Mario 64*. The chubbier characters – Kong, Koopa and Wario – struggle to negotiate this course's fiddlier bends.



Sherbert Land
Things start to turn nasty here, with copious opportunities for plunging into the icy water and a cave populated by malicious penguins. Scatter bananas and evil power-ups in the narrow corridors.

Wario Stadium
At a concentration-taxing 1591 metres, this is the second-longest circuit in the game. The track is wide, slidy and jumpy, and there are power-ups everywhere. Pray you don't get 'shrunk' as you speed up the big ramp to the jump.





Courses STAR CUP



Donkey Jungle Park
If earlier courses seem a little sedate, this one absolutely belts along. There's a river running through the middle with a paddle steamer cruising up and down it, an exciting jump, and short-cut potential in the uphill hairpin in the cave.

TIME ATTACK

Perhaps the most intense way to play *Mario Kart* is in Time Attack mode – particularly if you take it in turns with a friend. Here, you can race on any of the tracks, cleared of power-ups and other karts, with the simple aim of getting the quickest possible time over three laps. It might *sound* a bit dull, but once you've tried a track a few times you'll start to perfect a racing line all the way around and record times that come within hundredths of a second of each other. That's when it gets really competitive, as the slightest tyre-on-grass error will ruin everything. It's also an excellent way to practise for the Grand Prix races.

In Japan, the 'official' course for Time Attacking is the Flower Cup track, Mario Circuit. Nintendo are running a championship based around this course, with prizes of special gold N64 controllers. They reckon that to be in with a chance, you need a time of one minute 30 seconds or lower. To get a time like this you'll need to get off to a turbo start (see 'Speed Start!'), and use your three turbos at exactly the right times. (We find it's best to use them to cut across the sand trap just before the tunnel, but maybe that's where we're going wrong.) You'll also need to choose the right character. We currently favour Yoshi and Kinopio. On top of this you'll then need to master the infamously tricky 'drift cornering'. (See top left of this page.)

Our best time at the moment, incidentally, is 1'24.55", which we were pretty pleased with. Nintendo are reporting times of 1'17", however, and one Japanese magazine reckons, by taking a seemingly-impossible short-cut over the wall in the middle of the track, they can get down to 1'10". Gah.



△ *By using the nippy Kinopio and powersliding constantly, it's possible to slice chunks out of Mario Circuit.*



△ *If you're really excellent, you'll be able to liberate Mario's ghost (as described on the previous page). Then he. Must. BE. BEATEN.*



Yoshi Valley
Yoshi does seem particularly at home in this exhilerating race along narrow, high, twisty pathways. There's a choice of increasingly hazardous routes in the middle and a huge Yoshi egg waiting to squash the careless.



Hyuudoro Pond
Ricketty fences provide some protection against plunging into the pond, but they tend to have gaps at vital points. The haunted house is home to a flock of speed-sapping bats. Scary stuff, even for the most able player.

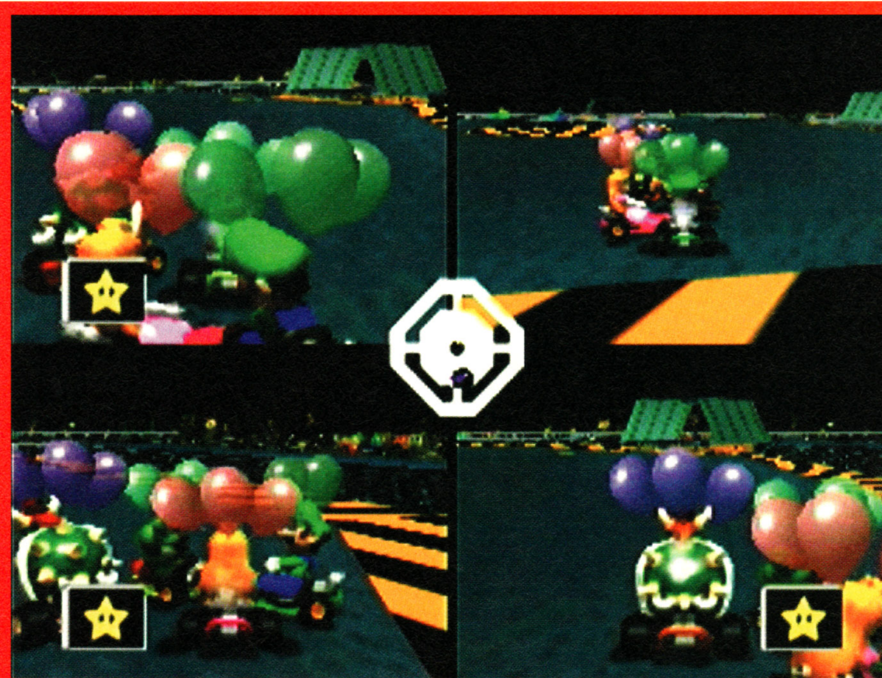


Rainbow Road
A test of endurance, more than anything else, as two kilometres of garish roadway strobe past. Hazards include giant Bullet Bills that zig-zag towards you and bananas that blend into the scenery. Short cut potential exists near the jump at the start.

YOU WON!
Win a cup and there's a smashing celebration at Peach's castle. You can't… skip… it… though. Tsk.



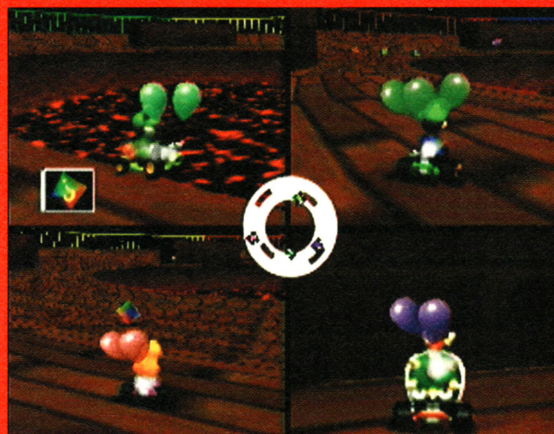




"Do you want to buy a balloon?" "No thanks. I've got three already."



That's one to the evil Wario, then. The scores are saved even when you hop from arena to arena, pleasingly enough.

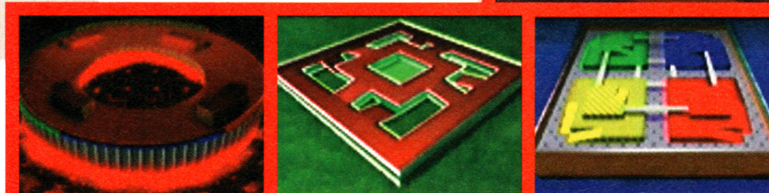


Luigi's the only one left with three. He must be under Jonathan's control.

BATTLE GAME

Mario Kart **on the SNES was perhaps most loved for its two-player Battle Game. You and a chum began with three balloons spinning around your kart and had to chase each other around arenas collecting power-ups and trying to pop each other's balloons. The Battle Game survives onto the N64, now with up to four players and four new, larger, multi-level arenas. The object's still the same – to hold onto your balloons the longest – but if more than two are playing, the losers are turned into bombs, and can chase the survivors around.**

To be honest, though, we haven't played the new Battle Game all that much. Maybe it's because the larger arenas lessen its intensity. Maybe it's because, with a greater variety of power-ups, the much-needed red shells are scarcer. Maybe it's because, unfortunately, it does slow down a teeny bit. Or maybe it's simply because the Grand Prix and Time Attack modes are so much fun. It's still single-handedly better than a lot of other games we've played, though.



Here are, for some reason, three of the four Battle Game arenas.



CONTROLS

Mario Kart 64's **controls are incredibly subtle, with all sorts of tricks and techniques to ferret out.**

Z
This activates any power-ups you pick up. If you're packing three shells, pressing Z once will put them into orbit around your kart, allowing you to pick up another power-up for use later. It's also possible to achieve this with single shells and banana skins by pressing and *holding* Z. A nifty tip, if you're in a hurry for a power-up, is to press Z while their pictures are cycling through in the little box; whichever power-up is currently on view will be instantly selected. Hardly anyone spots this, so it's great for gaining the edge in multi-player games.

ANALOGUE JOYSTICK
Steers you left and right in gradual increments. Also reverses you if you pull back on it while holding down B.

R
This either makes your kart do a jump, or controls 'drifting'. Jumping (press L or R briefly) allows you to take corners just a little bit tighter, and can also, if you're timing's really spot-on, be used to avoid hazards in your path.

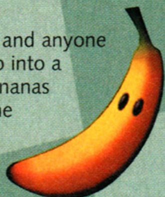
A
Accelerator.

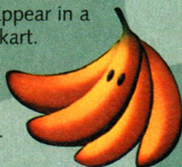
B
Brake. And, in combination with the joystick, reverse.

RIGHT C
Cycles between (1) a speedometer, (2) a map of the course showing the relative positions of all the racers, and (3) a leadership map running around the screen.

KART ATTACKS

Merely an added bonus in *Super Mario Kart*, power-ups are a vital part of *Mario Kart 64*. While this is perhaps a step in the wrong direction – victory often depends on the right power-up randomly appearing at the right time – a firm understanding of how each can best be used will greatly improve your chances.

Single Banana

Drop this behind you and anyone running over it will go into a spin. Alternatively, bananas can be launched to the front by holding the joystick forward as you press Z.

Multiple Bananas

Press Z and these appear in a string behind your kart. Anyone approaching you from behind will then go into a spin. Alternatively they can be scattered on the track by repeatedly pressing Z.

Green Shells

Zoom off when released, posing a hazard to anyone they collide with. Green shells can be dropped behind you by pulling the stick back as you press Z.

Red shells

Better than green shells in that they home-in on the nearest opposing kart.

Triple Shells

Come in red and green varieties, and can be put into orbit around your kart (like the balloons in *Super Mario Kart's* Battle Game) by pressing Z once. They'll then act as a shield, deflecting any enemy shells, bananas, other karts etc that hit them. Alternatively they can be fired off by pressing Z again.

Speed Mushrooms

These give you some extra speed, basically. They're available in ones and threes, and also as smashing Super Mushrooms, which you can use as many times as you want within a time limit. They don't have much effect on straights, and are best used to zoom across rough terrain, to start you off again if you crash, or to power out of slow corners.

Spiky shell

Homes-in like a red shell, but instead of taking out the nearest karter, it rushes off to find the race leader.

Evil Power-ups

Look like normal power-ups when dropped behind you, but kill anyone who tries to pick them up. Best when cunningly dropped among clusters of real power-ups as long as you keep a mental note for yourself.

Lightning

Activate this and everyone in the race will shrink. They'll then slow down drastically, and will be squashed should you 'accidentally' run over them. Lightning doesn't affect those who are invincible, invisible or on a speed-up ramp.

Super Star

Makes you invincible for a bit, and also increases your top speed and improves your handling. V. handy.

Ghost

Makes you temporarily invisible, as well as invulnerable to the shrinking effects of lightning. Can also pinch rivals' power-ups.

POWER UPPERY

Play *Mario Kart* loads and you'll begin to notice that power-ups aren't awarded entirely at random. If you're miles behind you'll get loads of Stars and Lightnings, while if you're in the lead you'll just get Green Shells and Bananas. If you fall into the latter category this might initially seem annoying, but the astute can use shells and bananas as shields by holding down the Z trigger, or cunningly fall behind just before the finish, grab a red shell, and then launch it at whoever's just taken the lead from them.

The morning our copy of *Mario Kart 64* arrived in the post, we were still trying to set up the N64 office. Piles of yet-to-be-unpacked boxes teetered in the corners; sophisticated computer equipment, waiting to be connected up and activated, cluttered the floor; and the walls were criss-crossed with test samples of different coloured paints. (We eventually settled on a sort of light yellow.) But when I peeled back the corner of the brown paper to reveal the *Mario Kart* box poking through, Golden Ticket-like, all thoughts of nest-building were forgotten. Wil leapfrogged over Tim towards our Japanese N64, pushing Tim's face into a mouldy pizza left behind by the previous occupants. James dropped the crate of dictionaries and encyclopedias he was carrying and grabbed the nearest 64 controller. And then, to the wail of racing engines, a spinning gold Nintendo logo heralded the arrival of *Mario Kart 64*, the eagerly-anticipated sequel to my all-time favourite Super Nintendo game.

And it's fantastically good.

To begin with, *Mario Kart 64* doesn't *look* like anything particularly special – particularly to those who've already played the SNES game to bits. The karts seem much the same, the graphics aren't anything special (at least by comparison with other N64 games), and it doesn't take long to see all the courses in 50cc mode. In fact, there are actually fewer circuits in this new game. And power-ups have been emphasised much more, so – initially at least – pure racing skills don't seem all that important.

Really play it a lot, though, and *Mario Kart 64* turns out to be a true Nintendo 64 game, combining unrivalled technical achievement and hectic fun in a way that consoles deprived of Nintendo games simply can't compete with.

OUTRAGEOUS CHEATING

Kart control has actually been fine-tuned over the SNES game, and is now immensely subtle. Rather than just pressing left and right a lot, as in traditional, *Ridge-Racer*-style games, you've got to treat *Mario Kart's* karts like real go-karts, powering round bends, clipping corners, veering past pot-holes and hopping over banana skins. Racing to win requires immense concentration, and you're constantly having to think fast to outwit other karts and avoid crashing. And, most importantly, I'm by far the best at this, reigning supreme over the rest of the **N64** team.

The more players you've got the more fun *Mario Kart 64* is, and extra 64 controllers are likely to vanish from the shelves when the game comes out over here. But even if you're playing alone it's endlessly absorbing, whether you're attempting harder and harder Grand Prix or trying to shave down your Time Attack times. (CPU karts do cheat outrageously, though. When you begin a cup the N64 decides who're going to be the strongest



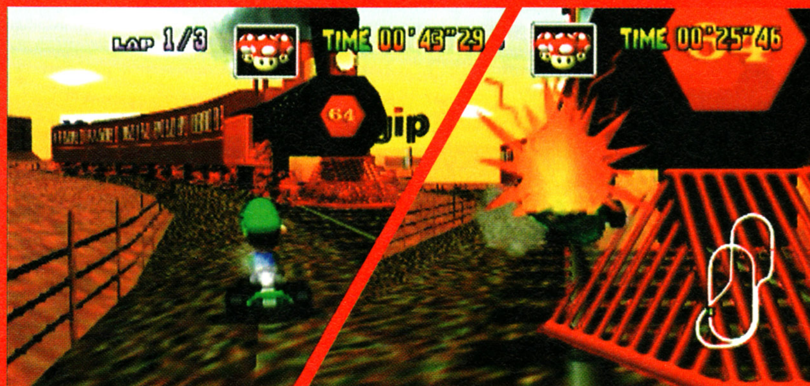
△ *Cow fans! The Moh Moh Farm circuit gets its name from the phonetic translation into Japanese of 'Moo Moo'. Correspondingly, it's surrounded by cows, several of which are on display here.*





△ *Short-cuts abound. Here's a crab-infested one through the sea on Noko Noko Beach.*

△ *You'll need a Star or a Mushroom to get through this tunnel on Noko Noko Beach.*



△ *The particularly bold may wish to try out this short-cut along the railway track in Kara Kara Desert. And the foolhardy won't wait till the train's got out of the way.*



△ *And, look, here's Peach's castle, just as it appears in* Super Mario 64.

characters and then, no matter how many times you clobber them and barge them off cliffs, they always stage miraculous comebacks and tussle for the lead right up to the line. It wouldn't be such a challenging game otherwise, though. I suppose.)

The graphics, which initially seem a little simplistic and disappointing, grow on you too. Some tracks are rather brown and bare, but there are smashing little touches everywhere, like the cows, and the overhead screens (on which you can watch yourself race), and the puffs of smoke when you skid. The characters themselves look superb – they're sprites, but rendered and then digitised (*Donkey-Kong-Country*-style) from every angle, so they're as good as solid models. And the speed is spot-on, running constantly at the maximum frame-rate in one-player mode and hardly slowing down at all even when four are playing. In fact, it's only in the most complicated of the Battle Mode arenas that things ever start to go a bit syrupy.

WHO'S KARTED?

But the reason *Mario Kart* is so much better than any other racing game I've played in my life – and makes it the first game I'd buy if I was treating myself to a new Nintendo 64 tomorrow – is the sheer amount of 'stuff' that Shigeru Miyamoto and his chums have packed into it. As with all the best Nintendo games, after playing it for a couple of days you've really only scratched the surface. You reckon you've got the measure of the Noko Noko Beach course and suddenly you discover the short-cut through the sea, opening up a whole new world of possibilities. You think you've got the power-ups sussed and you discover it's possible to hold down Z and pick up two at once. You finally get the hardest, 150cc mode licked and a new mode appears with all the tracks in reverse. Everywhere there are neat little touches, some carried over from *Super Mario Kart* and others that are all-new. The music speeds up excitingly on the last lap, for example; every character has his own range of cries and squeaks; 'drift' cornering takes ages to master but saves valuable milliseconds; you can go off-road and explore the castle from the beginning of *Super Mario 64*; Time Attack times come with hundredths of a second of each other – like Formula 1 laps; if you stray off the track in Donkey Jungle Park you'll be pelted with coconuts by unseen monkeys; and, finally, there's an uplifting credits sequence that takes you soaring around the circuits, swooping between cows and over waterfalls.

Like all Nintendo 64 games, *Mario Kart 64* is expensive. It isn't – shock, horror – as 'perfect' as the original *Super Mario Kart*, with success depending too heavily on the random appearance of useful power-ups. But it ought to last a lifetime – it's a game without an 'end' as such. If only non-importing 64-fans didn't have to wait until the *summer* for it. Bah.

JONATHAN



Little Japanese text, all of which is easily penetrated. And there's always the US version.

8 VISUALS

Lacking instant gob-smackingness, but the atmosphere and detailing is superb.

8 SOUNDS

Jolly tunes and plenty of apt spot effects.

9 MASTERY

Not technically astounding, but brimming with Nintendo goodies and secrets.

9 LIFESPAN

Even when you've finished the cups, you can continue improving your Time Attack and multi-player skills almost endlessly.

VERDICT

An extremely entertaining game, especially if you've got four controllers.

91%

TO BE CONTINUED... We'll do a huge PAL *Mario Kart* review, with maps, in the summer.



WAYNE GRETZKY'S 3D HOCKEY

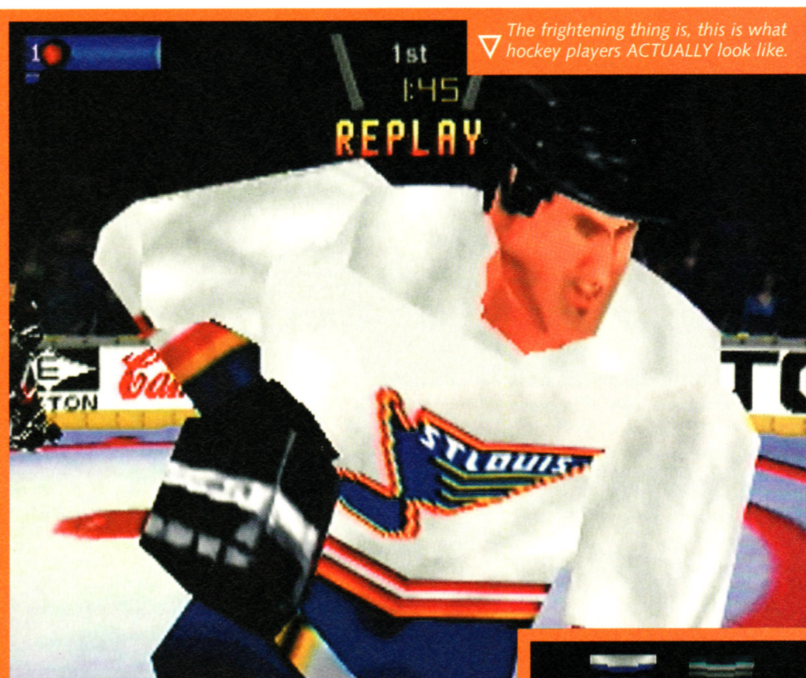
But he's prepared to let you have a go. Bless 'im.

Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey		
MIDWAY		
(US flag)	64M	1-4
Controller Pak back-up	~~Cartridge back-up~~	Out now UK release TBA
$80 (Approx £50)		

INVISIBLE PLAYERS!
As soon as the game starts, pause and select Replay. Choose a player using L or R and he'll start to flash. Now press Z and he'll disappear. Repeat to taste.

MUTANT PLAYERS!
While on the options screen, hold a C button and press R. 16 zeros appear at the bottom of the screen, the first three pairs of which represent the players' head size, body size and height. They can be changed using the Bottom, Left and Top C buttons.





The frightening thing is, this is what hockey players ACTUALLY look like.



You can perhaps take the camera back too far.









A lot of fighting takes place in the average ice hockey game…

…but not nearly as much as in a boxing match. Obviously.

Players smack into each other with wince-making crunches. Sticks become 'inadvertently' entangled with legs. Trailing fire, the puck zips from one end of the rink to the other, ricochets off an outstretched stick and careens into the net. The goal bursts into flames, a klaxon sounds, the crowd roars, and the defeated goalie sinks to his knees, an uncomfortable chilly dampness spreading up his thighs.

And, thanks to *Wayne Gretzky's* ultra-smooth N64-o-vision, all of this is more 'real' than it's ever been in on the PC or PlayStation. The players are solid, muscley blokes who can be zoomed-in-upon until they fill the whole screen. The camera swoops in for the face-off, and then pans up and out seamlessly as the puck shoots off and the players spread out. There isn't the detail – reflections on the ice, individual players' faces – of *NHL 97* on the PC, but *Gretzky* is by far the faster and more 'desirable' of the two games.

Probably the best single ingredient of *Wayne Gretzky*, though, is the contribution of the analogue joystick. It's perfect for controlling skaters, allowing you to send them gliding about in smooth curves, adjusting their speed and direction with minute precision. In fact, the thought of ever again having to control a skater with an ordinary joypad sends an icy shiver down my spine.

The chunky 3D graphics and little touches like the trail on the puck, the exaggerated collisions, and the special effects that turn the goalies – quite literally – into walls, mean that *Gretzky* really is a *game* rather than the accurate-but-dry simulation that some previous hockey titles have strived to be. Occasionally, the goalies can be rather stupid, falling every time for a puck slipped behind them at a shallow angle, but set the game to Hard and the computer out-field players will rarely let you get that close.

And then there are a range of leagues and championships including, for those with particularly empty diaries, a full 82-game season followed by play-offs. Alternatively, it's possible to rope in up to three friends, playing two per side. An exhaustive options menu allows the game to be customised in dozens of ways. You can you opt for one of two sizes of rink, flick between Arcade and Simulation modes, have between three and five players per side, turn off all the annoying and incomprehensible rules that keep causing the game to stop, and even, if you dare, turn the game's speed up to Fast. Here, even the trail on the puck isn't enough to track of it as it belts around at something approaching Mach 4.

Admittedly, *Wayne Gretzky* is just ice hockey all over again. You don't actually 'do' anything with it that Mega Drive *NHL* players haven't been doing for years – it's still just a case of barging through crowds of enemy players trying to get the puck into the goal. There's nothing wrong with that, though, and *Gretzky* handles it as only the Nintendo 64 can.

JONATHAN

VISUALS 7
Smooth 3D animation, but few frills.

SOUNDS ?
Bilious music, obviously, but good effects.

MASTERY 6
Excellent animation, but a little low on detail and some jerkiness.

LIFESPAN 6
Well, we're bored of it, but those still playing *NHL* will find this better.

VERDICT
Fast-moving, violent and intense. Ice hockey as it's meant to be played.

70%



FAST DELIVERY SERVICE
Three working days on stock items

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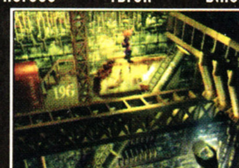
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ULTIMATE ELEPHANT
N64 Magazine can report that rumours of a 'naked Orchid' fatality, though presently non-existent, are depressingly inevitable in video game circles.



So for the early benefit of Sam Tweed in Lincoln, we'll demonstrate one of *KI Gold's* more indelicate touches with a genuine Ultimate Finish.



When your opponent's energy bar is flashing red, end any successful combo with HCB, F+QK as a finisher. This should pull off Maya's deeply-hurtful mammoth-for-a-hat fatality.



How very droll. Although, as we all know, the elephant ranks somewhere between the cow and the llama – and thus well short of the gerbil – on the grand scale of comedy mammals.

MORE TIPS!
Turn to page 92 for more tips and cheats on *Killer Instinct Gold*.

Decadently-rich textured backdrops make use of the N64's clever bits; cardboard characters make use of hormonal steroids.





The old firecat morph just doesn't cut the mustard any more, I fear.



You're thinking KI Gold looks quite good now, no?

Combo's pain must be dulled, somewhat, by the sublime pyrotechnic pulchritude of his burning shin. I'd be proud, personally. Of course, I've never had a burning shin so I don't know the exact level of pain involved.





Out of the way, Jago. Ah, that's better. The old KI spacewreck now looks very tidy...



... while shadow moves – absent on the SNES – recreate cheap Kung Fu movie FX.

Held backwards, two N64 joypads can become deadly claws. Roooooaaarrr!

KILLER

Three years ago, nobody could even conceive of something as stunning as *SM64*. And, sadly, *Killer Instinct Gold* is an unambitious echo from that time when the N64 was an unknown quantity. It's a conversion of Rare's *KI2* coin-op, more or less, and thus already a year too late for a sequel that was looking rickety at inception. Its appearance here and now seems as much by obligation as demand.

Looking no further than our cover vid's *Yoshi's Island 64* preview should dispel any fears you might harbour regarding the N64's potential for old-fashioned sprite handling. Nevertheless, the animation has suffered here. A disappointingly obvious loss of frames lends a jerky feel to the characters, who still sport their squat, dumpy *KI2* redesigns. It would be stupid to blame the stubbornly side-on format for gameplay shortfalls – ha, tell that to Capcom – but you can't avoid the nagging doubt that, just maybe, this retrogression didn't ever belong on the N64.

One criticism that refuses to die is that the *Killer Instinct* series was derivative from the very outset. Nick some bits from *Streetfighter II* and a few bobs from *Mortal Kombat* and churn them through your

Killer Instinct Gold		
NINTENDO/RARE		
(US flag)	64M	1-2
Controller Pak back-up	~~Cartridge back-up~~	Out now UK release June
$80 (Approx £50)		



A scaled out view with, yum, 3D copter blades.



Choppers fly by as the view scales in...



... and Glacius tests the potential of the drums.



Tick that 'interactive backgrounds' box, then.



And with the edge of the building also gone...



Orchid's rising helicopter is the finest Ultra Combo ever. Go on, try arguing.



Rendered on SGI machine, designed by berks. (It can't be healthy to have so much buttock exposed.)



A glimpse of a tiny, but very playable, Gargos.

NEWBIE FORTE

The suspect pleasure of *KI Gold* is derived almost entirely from learning and reproducing enormous combos (though a timely Breaker comes close). This makes it unlike many other fighting games in that you'll find you spend more time clocking up hits in the Training Mode than seeing off real or even CPU opponents: an insight into the type of game *KIG* is and its favoured audience, perhaps.

So newbies and pros alike should give thanks for the Training Mode. Your aged, levitating Sensei watches closely as you're taken through your paces and grading your performance with a creased brow. If only I could live out my twilight years in the fantasy world of martial arts, where wizened decrepitude implies the accumulated wisdom and deceptive fighting power of a Master and not, as is more likely, incontinence.



Combos are not unbreakable – it just takes a well-timed special thing. Like life, really.



"My foot! Stuck!... On Fire!" Kim Wu, the only student to lose to the training pole.



The fireball, foundation of fighting games. A classic move – a quarter circle of joy.



The dragon punch – flaming fist or funky thigh, you know it already really.

INSTINCT GOLD



render mill for a slightly cynical best-seller. Its game depth was never a serious rival to Capcom's finest, and the emphasis on enormous semi-automatic combos proved all too superficial in the long term. Even its most devout fans measured their prowess by memorising and performing the longest or glitchiest combos, rather than prizing tactical finesse. But credit where it's due: as a SNES conversion, it was a tasty slice of violence pie. Stretching the possibilities of 16-bit with its hi-res pre-rendered sprites and OTT effects, *Killer Instinct* was remarkable for its sheer technical chutzpah. It was the sort of high energy blast that made you feel good about your machine and, dammit, it worked for plenty of us.

A couple of years ago, against the likes of *Primal Rage* and the *Kombat*, such a formula could just about hold its own. *KI Gold* may introduce new characters, 'interactive' stages and combo tweaks, but its failure to address this core lack of depth now leaves it looking tired and unsophisticated. Getting in that first hit and chaining twenty more can't amuse indefinitely, and it no longer has the looks to turn heads.

From your letters we know that the *KI2* coin-op still has its adherents, and it's to you that we can at least commend *Gold* on its own terms. This is a thoughtful home conversion, boasting features a-plenty and holding a trove of saveable hidden options that reveal themselves through successful completion of the game. Can't remember a move? Just consult the built-in list. In some areas, such as the scaling texture-mapped backgrounds, you'll even spot genuine improvements over the original 32-bit arcade cabinet.

Moves can be entered with either the analogue stick or the D-pad, and both exhibit initial sensitivity problems. In the long term you may have more luck with the D-pad, but as this is very likely your first reason for touching it then you may find some serious breaking-in necessary before diagonals and dragon punches register smoothly.

Ideally, the N64 will find its own showcase beat-'em-up to rival *Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter 2*. Currently, it has this and *Mortal Kombat Tragedy*. Harumm. These are early days, sure, but we're eager to see a worthy champion step into the arena before Nintendo disenchants a keenly-devoted sector of the gaming fraternity.

ZY



... it's time for more uppercut hi-jinx. Oho!



Concluding with a cop-out red flash, KI2 fans.

5 VISUALS
Curtailed animation does no favours for a sprite-based game.

8 SOUNDS
CD-quality, excellent sampling, occasionally wasted on sub-disco mediocrity.

5 MASTERY
More SNES than N64.

5 LIFESPAN
After a couple of months you'll never want to play it again, sadly.

VERDICT
Guaranteed to please fans of the coin-op. And nobody else.

62%



So… why are half of them holding their hands at a different height?



Continuing the excellence theme, the all-important penalty set-up is the best yet seen, with a wandering targetting sight ensuring the goalkeeper has a sporting chance with bad shots.

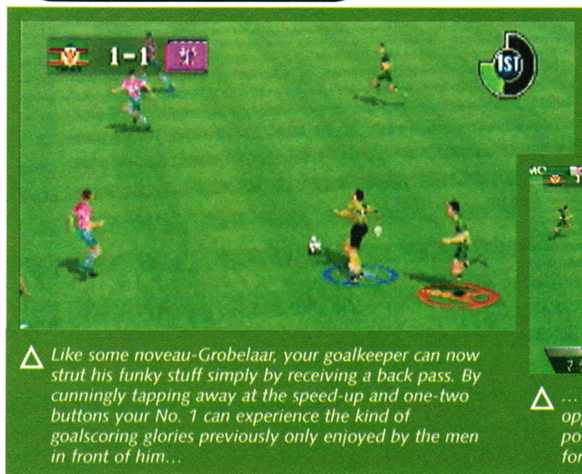




J-LEAGUE PERFECT

J-League Perfect Striker		
KONAMI		
Controller Pak back-up	64M On-cartridge back-up	1-4
¥9800 (Approx £50)		Out now UK release June

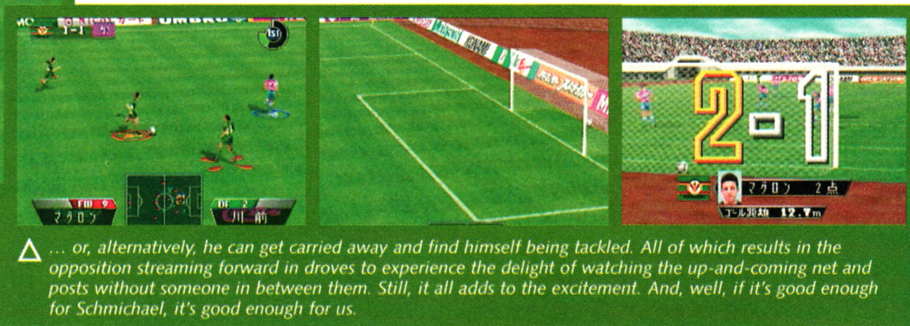
To be called ISS64 for its European debut, Perfect Striker arrives in Japan. And it instantly turns out to be incredibly good!



Like some noveau-Grobelaar, your goalkeeper can now strut his funky stuff simply by receiving a back pass. By cunningly tapping away at the speed-up and one-two buttons your No. 1 can experience the kind of goalscoring glories previously only enjoyed by the men in front of him…

WALK THIS WAY

Thanks to the invention that is the back pass rule, goalkeepers can now take an active part in out-field proceedings. Take heed…



… or, alternatively, he can get carried away and find himself being tackled. All of which results in the opposition streaming forward in droves to experience the delight of watching the up-and-coming net and posts without someone in between them. Still, it all adds to the excitement. And, well, if it's good enough for Schmichael, it's good enough for us.

A WORD, NO.9...

Such is *Perfect Striker's* fulsome nature that almost every footballing quirk is included. Take, for example, the referees. If you fancied your chances of getting away with a bit of mouthing or a gentle tap to your opponent's heels, then think again. The Little Hitlers™ contained herein won't stand for any of it, with their notebooks and multi-coloured cards.



You've committed the cardinal sin of taking someone's legs out. The ref, bless him, calls you over to have a word... ▷



△ *... and he has one all right. In fact, he has several, and the strong piece of pertinent prose that follows...*

△ *... results in the horrifying sight of a yellow card. Penalty points and suspensions suddenly began to circulate uncomfortably in your head...*



△ *...appealing achieves absolutely nothing, and all too soon he's scribbling away in his book, noting the whys and the wherefores.*



△ *Still, you can seek solace in the fact that you've managed to seriously injure one of your thespian opponents.*

CROWD CONTROL

The sound in most football games only seems to amount to a couple of monotonous chants, and mostly unrecognisable ones at that. But Konami have spearheaded a new system, catchily labelled the Response Sound System, where the crowd in the game reacts to the excitement on the field. So, if the match starts to descend into a mid-park battle for superiority, the crowd quietens down due to the lack of action. If you manage to pull something a little bit special out of the bag, on the other hand, they'll erupt into knees-up versions of 'When the Saints' and copious amounts of cheering. All of which means the crowd never sounds like they've constantly humming as in 32-bit favourites of yesteryear. RSS will also feature in Konami's *Power Pro Baseball 4*.

STRIKER



◁ *There are at least 10 different goal celebrations. Some are a touch camp, but they're all pretty well realised.*



The goalkeeper urges his teammates upfield, hopeful of a last-minute up-and-under equaliser. ▷



△ *Only a miraculous piece of defending can save the keeper now.*







At free kicks, there's a definite chance to orchestrate one of those training ground moves. Are you getting the message? This game is flipping BRILLIANT!



The goalkeeper urges his teammates upfield, hopeful of a last-minute up-and-under equaliser.

ACCESSIBILITY

The tactics screens are impossible but you can just about scrape through to the game.

VISUALS 9

Glorious motion capture, but the little things, like appealing to the ref, make the game.

SOUNDS 8

Manic Japanese commentary, crowd chants and the subtle sound of ball thwumping against net.

MASTERY 8

No other system could do football like this. Some slowdown, but otherwise brilliant.

LIFESPAN 9

The controls and moves are so good, and multi-player so fine, this will easily last.

VERDICT

A fantastic N64 debut for football, and April's Europeanization should spell complete satisfaction. Superb.

89%

Grasping the intricate mechanics of The Beautiful Game has always been something of a problem for football carts. *ISSD* – **in all its playable wonderment – on the Super Nintendo came closest, combining a plethora of on-field options with the kind of behind-the-scenes set-up you generally only see in icon-fests such as** *Premier Manager.* **But, perhaps because of the SNES's limitations, it lacked an overall sense of completion.**

With *Perfect Striker*, however – J-League monicker, in this case, optional – Konami have set about their 64-bit overhaul of *ISSD* with the kind of thoroughness Hoddle would apply to his England team. Witness, for example, the pre-match options (similar in look and feel to *ISSD's* but taken a stage further), which include screen after screen of playing choices. *Perfect Striker's* being entirely in Japanese is, of course, a big problem. But it's eventually possible to modify everything from formations to attacking patterns, allowing you to decide exactly how you want your team to play.

FLUGELS

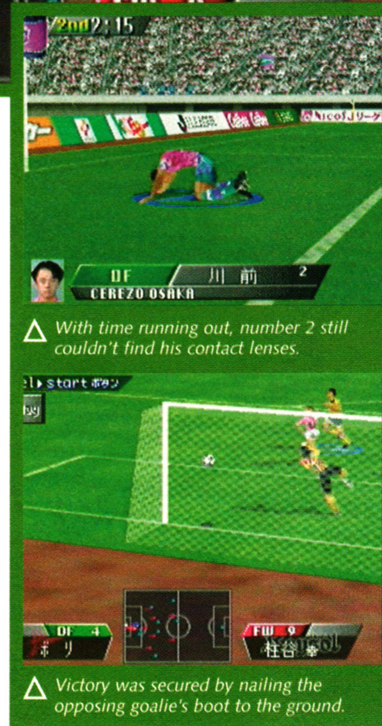
Squad-wise, the J-League endorsement allows for 18 teams, ranging from the Lineker-graced familiarity of Grampus Eight to the let's-laugh-at-Johnny-Foreigner delights of Jef United and the Flugels. The ferverous excitement of playing as a member of the Red Diamonds, however, doesn't quite prove as exhilarating as doing your bit for Her Majesty's finest. But, come April and a welcome injection of FIFA countries, the worthy cause of England, Scotland and, ahem, Wales should prove considerably more gratifying. Still, that minor blemish aside, few are likely to disagree that is the finest interpretation of football currently available on any format.

The first stroke of genius is the player animation. Not only do *Perfect Striker's* footballers perform the basics with frightening realism, but they also celebrate goals by running off with one arm aloft, push and shove each other after bad challenges, and protest to the linesman and referee after decisions go the wrong way. This is, indisputably, what a football game should be about. Total immersion. You begin a game and, until it finishes, you're unlikely to remember you're actually taking part merely via a joypad.

ECSTASIES

The controls are easy to pick up, but expert players will want to explore the yellow directional buttons. Each serves a different purpose, with sliding tackles, short passes, speed-ups and one-twos amongst its illustrious repertoire. The A button, meanwhile, provides you with the velvety joys of a passing game, and B the unfathomable ecstasies of shooting. All of which leads you by the hand to the point where *Perfect Striker* becomes just slightly suspect.

Certainly, scoring is brilliantly dealt with, with the most outrageous volleys frequently accompanying the simplest of far post headers. But, as Konami themselves admit, the difficulty setting for this Japanese version is ludicrously simple. So easy is it to score that results often end up touching double figures. Upping the hardness goes some way to remedying this, but the goalkeepers are consistently dodgy in the handling department and, too often, half-arsed pokes at the ball end up nestling in the back of the net.



With time running out, number 2 still couldn't find his contact lenses.

Victory was secured by nailing the opposing goalie's boot to the ground.

Thankfully, this problem is going to be addressed for the European version, *International Superstar Soccer 64*, with the difficulty upped to allow for tension-filled 1-0 wins as in ISSD.

Perfect Striker isn't flawless by any means, but it's certainly as close a rendering of football there's been on any format. Even after witnessing some horrendous slowdown in a packed penalty box you're not likely to change your mind on that count. The beauty of *Perfect Striker* is not so much that it's good fun (which it is), but that it grasps the workings of football so brilliantly. Time to change your allegiance, perhaps... **TIM**



The rice boy sticks one in from close-quarters.



The goal replays are disappointingly short, but can be viewed from a variety of angles and in slo-mo.



A fairly standard options screen. There's a world league and cup as well as the standard 'friendly' game.

and coming soon...

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER 64

While it'd be well worth buying J-League Perfect Striker on import, if you can wait till June your patience will be rewarded by International Superstar Soccer 64, minus the Japanese commentary and menus and plus some reassuringly European teams.



Flip the coin for kick off and ends. Alternatively just press Start to skip past and get a random decision.



Those of you've who've discovered the Nintendo 64 via the SNES are likely to have fond memories of Konami's blisteringly good *International Superstar Soccer*. Japanese football games had never quite hit the mark before *ISS's* appearance, with poorly-animated players dribbling the ball uninterestingly up and down the pitch. And the only alternatives were *Striker*, the clumsy *FIFA* and a slightly slow-moving conversion of *Sensible Soccer*. Then along came *ISS*, with complex special moves, great speed, cunning controls, nifty graphics and an ever-enthusiastic crowd. It was great, and became even greater in its subsequent *Deluxe* incarnation.

And, with a '64' on the end, it's going to become even greater still. *International Superstar Soccer 64* will basically be *J-League Perfect Striker* with the J-League teams and stadiums replaced by European ones, the unintelligible-though-hugely-entertaining Japanese commentary replaced by a more sensible English one, and the difficulty level upped a bit. Oh, and all the unfathomable menus and options translated too.

Komani's Major A team are currently finishing off the conversion work at their Osaka headquarters, and reckon the results should reach our shores by June. Over the page we chat with them about *ISS64*, the N64, and 320 different ways of kicking a ball.

GO! GO!



One of the best features of ISS64 is the way in which players' morale (measured here with the ball faces) can drop during a match. Tactical substitutions are a must, not just an adornment.





You can take corners with either foot to produce in or out-swing. Hit the ball towards a striker waiting in the box with a bicycle kick before dancing around the living room shouting "GOOOAAAAAALLLLL".



Meeting the Major A team

By JONATHAN DAVIES



(Right to left) Konami's Major A team are: Fumimasa Katakami, who's in charge of the graphics; Eiji Nakagawa, who deals with the players' artificial intelligence; and Yasuo Okuda, who heads the team and does all the programming. They report to Katsuya Nagae, who's in charge of Konami Computer Entertainment Osaka's R&D department.

The Japanese games industry is one of the world's most secret things. No-one gets even the slightest peek at a new game until its developers are absolutely ready, and development teams are shrouded in secrecy lest they be 'headhunted' by rivals. N64 Magazine, however, slices through red tape like a knife through, er, some red tape, and I decided to make it my business to be the first Western journalist ever to penetrate Konami Computer Entertainment Osaka.

KCEO occupy two floors of a massive building in Osaka, which is sort of Japan's equivalent of Birmingham. Having arranged an appointment with the Major A team, who've coded all the *ISS* games, I was shown into a small room into which Mr Katakami, Mr Nakagawa, Mr Okuda and Mr Nagae filed, all wearing their special brown Major A team jackets.

Me: Hello. So, er, which football games did you look at for ideas when designing *Perfect Striker?*
Mr Okuda: The game we see as our main rival is Sega's *Victory Goal.* It's the best 32-bit soccer game.

Me: And what did you decide would be your priorities when writing the game?
Mr Okuda: We looked at two main areas. First, how the game would look. It's the first time we've used motion capture, and we wanted the game to move as realistically as possible. Secondly, as there have already been several soccer games that use 3D polygons, we really wanted to put the emphasis on playability, particularly with regard to the analogue joystick. We had the possibility of moving the players in hundreds of different directions. We also wanted to look at how the player could be given control of all 11 players in his team.

Me: How did you go about getting the players to move so convincingly as a team?
Mr Nakagawa: Normally you'd just have attacking players, mid-fielders and defenders. But we broke it down further, so we've got a defender who tends to attack down the left, or an offensive mid-fielder who'll pass to a forward to achieve a goal.

Me: Who did you base the motion-captured players on?
Mr Katakami: We recorded the movements of a student who played football, not a professional footballer. Altogether I sketched 80 pages of actions – around 320 actions altogether – and we motion-captured 270 of them, deciding which ones would be best. Most of these then went into the game, although we did leave a few out.

Me: The ones you left out – was that because they weren't useful, or because of a lack of cart space?
Mr Katakami: It's because we didn't think they'd add to the game. We didn't have to worry about the size of the cart at all when writing the game.

Me: Did you hit any problems with using motion capture?
Mr Katakami: The hardest thing is to join the animations together and getting them to react to the controls. You might notice than some motion-captured games look extremely realistic, but don't respond well to the controls because they're too busy playing through motion captures. What we did was to break each capture down into smaller pieces, rather than using it as it was, to improve playability. For the first *ISS* games we didn't use motion capturing, but we did video players to get realistic movement.
Mr Nagae: Our aim from way back was not to simulate real soccer, but to make a game that's fun to play.

Me: Do you have a favourite bit of motion capture in the game?
Mr Katakami: Hmm. Probably the way a player crouches slightly when he's about to dash. There's a huge variety of kicks, too – be sure to watch out for them all.

Me: What's it like programming on the N64, then?
Mr Nagae: 16-bit machines are



With FIFA blagging most of the licenses, ISS64 has to use made-up player names, something which affects the game in no way at all. They're jolly good made-up names, too.



The motion-captured special moves have to be seen to be believed. ISS64 is the most disturbingly realistic football game we've played. And those players at the bottom of the page are just plain disturbing.







programmed in assembler, but the N64 is programmed in C. It's therefore much easier to get hold of information, in the form of books, libraries and so on.
Mr Okuda: *Perfect Striker* was the first time the team had programmed a 64-bit machine, the first time we'd used motion capture, and the first time we'd programmed with polygons. To be honest, we didn't know where to start. Previously the R&D team had had to create every move by hand. Using motion capture, though, means that the animation is automatically calculated, so all Mr Katakami had to do was sketch the moves we wanted to capture.
Mr Nagae: The N64 is definitely the best machine to write a soccer game for, because it uses cartridges rather than CDs. Other machines have a limited memory to store information read from the CD, but the N64 can get information from the cart at any time. The PlayStation, on the other hand, has to load everything in and store it in its memory.

Me: Did you find the size of the cartridge restrictive?
Mr Okuda: A developer is never satisfied with the space available, and always wants more. But as well as all the graphics, we also managed to fit in all the commentary, which ran to 75 pages of situations that commentary had to be written for.

Me: Does the N64 make artificial intelligence easier?
Mr Nakagawa: When we started doing the AI, we were excited to find that the N64 is about 100 times faster than the SNES. We had more difficulty with the display, however, getting 22 players to move without slowing down.

Me: Could *ISS64* be written for other machines?
Mr Okuda: We could convert it to the PlayStation or Saturn, but we'd have to delete quite a bit from it because of memory size restrictions.

Me: What differences will there be between *Perfect Striker* and *ISS64?*
Mr Okuda: We've got to change the J-League teams into national teams, change the players' skin and hair colours, create five new stadiums, change the team strips, and alter the backgrounds to the edit screens and things to give them a more realistic look. We've also got to speed up the game for PAL machines.

Me: How easy is it to overcome the PAL machine's slower speed?
Mr Okuda: It's easy – all we have to do is multiply all the calculations by 1.2. We're also trying to make the game run on the full screen.

Me: If you leave *Perfect Striker* on its default setting, it's really easy to score goals. The goalies seem particularly weak. Come come? Will this change for the European release?
Mr Okuda: Basically, the game was designed for the Japanese market, where games that are too difficult aren't regarded as very good. We wanted everyone to be able to enjoy the game, even if they're not experienced football game players. For the European market we're setting the difficulty level higher.

Me: Might a sequel to *ISS64* be 64DD-based?
Mr Nagae: We're not really thinking about 64DD yet, because it hasn't actually been revealed how it will work.

Me: Great. So do you fancy a game, then? Of *ISS64?*

Ah. My luck seemed to have run out. Komani refused to let me near any of their games, let alone the nearly-complete *ISS64*. And an attempt to circumvent their security by feigning an urgent need for the toilet, in the hope of passing through some top-secret areas en route, was foiled by the provision of a 'minder' who waited unsettlingly outside the door, with the additional consequence making it extremely hard to concentrate. Oh well. Before being ejected I did manage to talk to Kuniaki Kinoshita, President of KCEO, about Konami's other new N64 titles. More on that soon. N64

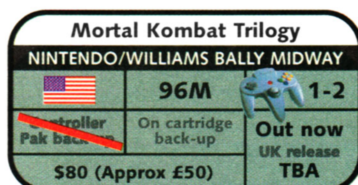


TO BE CONTINUED... We'll review the excellent *ISS64* massively upon its release in June.

CONTROL FREAK
Surprisingly, the N64 pad doesn't actually ease the playability of *MK Trilogy*. In fact, if anything, it chokes it a bit. As you know, there are plenty of buttons all over the pad (we're not fooling anyone here are we?) and each one controls a certain action, with subtle changes when you're at close quarters. But with the A and B buttons larger and more naturally placed, it seems a more of an effort to reach the C buttons if you've got fat hands.

Yes, you can configure the pad to your own tastes, but with the trademark rapid single button pressing of *Mortal Kombat*, it can be quite fiddly to pull off the more complex combos. The noticeably slower nature of the N64 version doesn't help much either. It's going to take longer for the novice player to get to grips with the controls, that's for sure.

Taking advantage of software-famished N64 gamers in the US, the Kombat series arrives in style.



It's been around longer than Hugh Scully and it's sprouted more imitations than Michael Crawford's celebrated Frank Spencer. Yet five years since the first *Mortal Kombat* launched itself at *Street Fighter 2's* windpipe, the spleen-lacerating guile of the 2D amputate-'em-up reaches its climax on Nintendo's dusky fun engine.

With the likes of the fully 3D *Mortal Kombat 4* and the RPG *MK Mythology* due for the N64 treatment later this year, it might reek of the proverbial cash-in to find a straightforward port of one of the earlier entries in the saga appearing on our fresh-faced console. But that's exactly what we have here. And is it worth the healthy asking price? My giddy aunt, no.

It's so hard not to sound subjective when reviewing a *Mortal Kombat* title. You'll forever be accused of being 'in the *Street Fighter* camp', or, in this case, just slating it because it's not pushing the N64 in any way whatsoever. But why not? This machine's more powerful than God! *MK Trilogy* is one of the most lacklustre, nonchalant pieces of programming you'll (hopefully never again) see on the N64. You can perhaps forgive the sloppy, rough presentation – also seen in Williams' other current title *Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey* – but you can't let pass the fact that key features have been well and truly muffed.

It's not technically up to scratch, for a start. The speech and sound effects seem to have been recorded under a pile of dirty washing they're so muffled, while the trained eye can tell that it's not running in quite as high-res as the PlayStation version (the loss of animation frames also gives it a slightly jerkier appearance). There's also a touch of slowdown in several key areas, most obvious when you hoof your opponent through a stage's background.

MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY

A blend of the finest...

Mortal Kombat Trilogy – a home-exclusive entry in the series – takes elements from the original *Mortal Kombat, MK2, MK3* and *Ultimate MK3* (including the latter's game engine) and adds its own unique features. One of the biggest criticisms hurled in *MK Trilogy's* direction, though, is how surprisingly unbalanced it feels, with this combination of different combo techniques and styles.

The biggest of the *Trilogy*-unique features is the new Aggressor Mode. At the bottom of the screen an Aggressor Meter will build up during a fight (handily forming the word 'Aggressor' in filthy great letters so no one gets confused). Pull off an attack or defence (the meter filling up quicker if you successfully block attacks) that the CPU deems particularly tasty and for a brief period you'll become extremely hard-hitting. You'll know you've slipped into Aggressor Mode when a series of 'shadows' follows your Mortal Kombateer's every move. This won't last long, so it's best to time this change to coincide with an opponent's energy bar at middle-low, allowing you to roll straight into an impressive bloody Brutality finisher.



It's a pity you can't hear this MK Trilogy. It sounds absolutely bleedin' terrible.

This long-awaited N64 version has been universally slated by MK fans.

There are more than enough fighters for you to choose from.





Pump up your Aggressor bar to get that ever-so-slightly impressive shadowy trail.



Kitana may be in full-on Aggressor Mode, but that's no reason to fear the little lady.



Yes, yes, special moves. We love them at the best of times, but frankly, this is a wasted opportunity. Where's all that N64 trickery that could have been used?

These sort of quirks should really have been cleaned up during the later stages of its development – the 11 playtesters employed by Williams must have been sitting around on their hands. The only major advantage N64 *MK Trilogy* has over its 32-bit contemporaries is that, obviously, there are no loading times to speak of. Not *much* of a saving grace, that.

The worst bit is that those insanely possessive *Mortal Kombat* fans are likely to have been holding on for the launch of N64 *MK Trilogy*, hoping for it to be the definitive version. But there's no denying that if you get hold of a PlayStation and its version you can play the better game. Let's face it, if software like this starts slipping out right at the start of the N64's life, it'll do nothing but butcher the reputation set up by *Super Mario 64*, *Pilotwings* and the like. And none of us want that.

MARCUS



△ *To be brutally honest, the SNES version of Ultimate Mortal Kombat's a much more playable, enjoyable experience.*



△ *Yes, YOU can take on two fighters! Although, not at the same time, as this screenshot would have you believe. You do only have one life, though...*

▽ *In today's bustling beat-'em-up genre, the Mortal Kombat series won't be able to sell itself on bucketloads of gore alone. How will MK4 cope?*



She Kano take n'more, cap'n

Alternatives: that's what you'll be looking at after playing this *Mortal* muck. Admittedly, after plumping for an N64 you're going to be a bit limited when it comes to beat-'em-up cheer over the next few months. Even in Japan and the US, there have been few releases to attract the serious punch-punter. But forget *Mortal Kombat* – oh, please, please try – and instead fill your mind with the thought of better things to come. The only other heavyweight contender currently available on import is *Killer Instinct Gold*, an enjoyable if not astounding variation on coin-op *KI2*. But with the likes of Williams' *Wargods, Street Fighter Ex, Street Fighter 3, Dual Heroes, Mace, Dark Rift* and mad-all-over-its-face sumo wrestler *64 Oozumo* all due to hit the import scene this year, you'd be an absolute gibbon to plump for *MK Trilogy*.



△ **Dual Heroes** *A brave foray away from Bomberman territory for fighting first-timers Hudsonsoft. DH is notable for its unique 'virtual player' approach to the single-player mode.*



△ **Killer Instinct Gold** *A member of the N64's original game line-up, this is the fighter to impress your dad with. Even so, it's not up to N64 standard: see our review on page 76.*



Mace



Street Fighter 3



Dark Rift

△ **64 Oozumo** *Crazy like a fox with its portly, bug-eyed warriors, this sumo-sim isn't likely to appeal to mainstream grapple fans in the West. Still has terrific novelty value though.*



△ *Despite effects like Rain's lightning burst, the graphics aren't quite as crisp all round as the PlayStation version. And that's a travesty. Williams are, quite frankly, insane.*

4 VISUALS
Old Hat. Not quite as crisp as the PlayStation version, but incorporates improved graphical features, including several nice transparency effects.

2 SOUNDS
Absolute guff. The in-game speech and fx are so dull you have to crank the TV's volume right up to make them out.

0 MASTERY
This isn't what you bought your N64 for. Seems to have been developed for a different system to the one *Super Mario* and *Turok* appear on.

8 LIFESPAN
As per pigging usual for *MK*, there are five difficulty settings and four different 'destinies' to reach in single-player.

VERDICT
Vastly over-rated as a game and an extremely poor use of the N64's powers. This really is best avoided.

34%

ROUGHING IT
When playing out of the rough or from the sand-drenched trickiness of the bunkers, try to get as far under the ball as possible to achieve ultimate lift.

NICE CLUB
It's worth paying a visit to the Player Configuration screen (on the right here) before matches. You can chop and change your clubs to your heart's content and even opt for a different set of balls.



Before each round you can tailor your player to your own requirements.



The second selectable player (from the menu of four in) is just about the best. His clubs feature the best variety, this 266-yarder, for example, providing the necessary firepower to achieve the 360 yard first green.



Playing shots out of the bunker isn't actually too tricky. Just get under the ball.



Disco greens a-plenty in St Andrews. Put in to help you anticipate the 'break'.



The lack of variety in the greens doesn't really help the game's overall appearance.



Before you play each course you are given a bird's-eye tour of what's on the menu.



The computer automatically selects a club, but, it's not always the best one.



ACCESSIBILITY
A lot of bewildering text, but enough Japlish and picture icons to help you through.

VISUALS 3
Hardly anything of worth, with even some basic, written-in-stone rules broken.

SOUNDS 5
Limited sound effects, Game Boy music and supremely suspect sampled speech.

MASTERY 4
Makes little use of the N64's power with its dated looks and lack of pace.

LIFESPAN 6
The courses aren't varied enough, but master the controls and it's a slightly better prospect.

VERDICT
It looks like a travesty but plays pretty well. However, N64 golf deserves a better representative than this.

58%



THE GLORY OF ST ANDREWS

The illustrious Saint Andrews, the breathtaking N64 and some Grade 'A' trouser patterns...

The Glory of St Andrews		
SETA		
(Japan)	64M	1-4
~~Controller Pak back-up~~	On cartridge back-up	Out now
¥9800 (Approx £50)		UK release Unlikely

Despite golf's continued ascension up popularity's illustrious ladder, *The Glory of St Andrews* was hardly likely to find itself drowned in anticipation. Seta, for one, have a CV shorter than their name and the game's recent appearance on the otherwise splendid Shoshinkai video did little more than convince several thousand Japanese gamesplayers that it was likely to be nothing more than a feast of visual atrocities.

And yet, in some respects... well... it really isn't *that* bad. Plainly, its eye-candy value hardly comes up to 16-bit standards with classic SNES golfers such as *PGA Tour* wiping the floor with its untidy, glitchy, collection of graphical faux-pas. Clipping frequently rears its ugly head, as does dodgy collision detection. On top of this, your player (who is quite content to behave perfectly adequately for the majority of the game) occasionally seems to lose all control over his bodily functions, turning into some kind of pseudo-Melting Man, changing shape and size as he swings at the ball.

But, if you persist, you may find yourself forgiving the lack of graphical invention. In a stroke of unsurprising yet welcome inspiration, Seta have devised a system whereby the analogue stick acts as a virtual golf club. Pulling back on the stick results in your golfer swinging back, and pushing the stick forward will bring his club crashing down – hopefully sending the ball 300 yards down the fairway. Of course matters are made more complicated by the fact that you have to time your strokes. Once you're positioned, an inflating/deflating red sphere will appear inside the golf ball in the bottom right of

THE HOLE WAY

The rigors of St Andrews are such that even the simple things prove trying. However, follow our simple-to-use guide and you'll be fine. Probably...

TEE-OFF
On a long fairway such as this, opt for a hefty wood. This particular beauty will hit up to 266 yards. Set the cross-hair dead centre and then try your luck as the sphere reaches its smallest point.



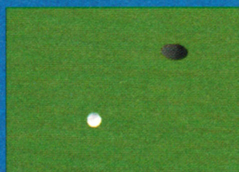
FAIRWAY
If you've pulled something just a little bit special out of the bag, you'll be finely positioned for a 100 yard chip to the green. Select your club carefully, remembering that it's better to slightly under-hit the ball than send it powering over and beyond.



GREEN
Putting is the trickiest part of *St Andrews*, especially as it's anybody's guess at how the bleedin' thing really works. Still, if you know a bit of Japanese you're laughing, and if you don't, then try having the putter about half way back and the sphere fairly (but not too) small.



HOLE
Thanks to the fact that most of the greens are flat, predicting dips and rises in the shouldn't be a problem. So, once you've holed the ball, watch as your trouser-victim of a golf player gets all excited about his success (and new sweatshirt). Nice.



the screen. At its biggest, the sphere represents a chance shot which could hurtle off anywhere, while at its tiniest, it results in quality, straight-down-the-middle golf.

There is, however, an overwhelming feeling that *TGoSA* could have been so much better. Basing the courses on the heather and haggis of St Andrews would surely have been the perfect opportunity for some scenic grandeur but, instead, all 18 holes look unnecessarily similar. The greens offer no challenge at all, generally being flatter than the proverbial pancake and, as with all golf games that rely heavily on a shot timing mechanism, frequent frustrating failures will occur. Golf should be more about tactics, thought and planning than the game of precise button tapping that we have here. And at £50 a throw, you'd certainly be well within your rights to expect something just a little better.

TIM

CRUIS'N USA

If Mario Kart isn't to your taste, we're afraid for now this is the only alternative.



△ *Redwood Forest, where things get slightly less tedious. For a while.*

Cruis'n USA		
NINTENDO/WILLLIAMS		
(US flag)	64M	1-2
Controller Pak back-up	On cartridge back-up	Out now
$70 (Approx £45)		UK release TBA

Having turned off the harrowingly awful music and reconfigured the controls so you don't use the Z trigger to accelerate, it's possible to appreciate that *Cruis'n USA* does have a few things in its favour.

The computer-controlled cars, for example, behave entirely believably – you'll often round a bend to discover that a large group of them have driven head-on into a fire engine. The crashes are pleasingly cartoon-like, with you able to send lorries spinning over your head if you clip the back of them correctly. And there are one or two exciting moments, like when you're racing towards the level-crossing beside a huge train, trying to avoid getting crushed to death.

But in these times of *Sega Rally* and *Ridge Racer*, *Cruis'n USA* seems stuck in a bygone era of cardboard scenery and endlessly snaking roads. The levels all use the same garish palette of colours and – give or take the odd canyon or bridge – look identical, so there's no sense of progress as you're 'cruis'n' the USA. Which, incidentally, it's possible to do within twenty-six minutes of switching on for the first time. Things do get a little tricky through the twisting Redwood Forest about a third of the way in, but it soon eases off for the rest of the game.

The worst thing, though, is that the only reason *Cruis'n* has any challenge at all is because the controls are so crap. Nudge the stick gently and you either don't move at all or you'll hurtle across three lanes and into the path of an oncoming Jeep. Either that or you'll hit a variety of stop-you-dead obstacles cretinously placed on and off the road.

Cruis'n isn't a game you can get better at by practising a lot, so there's no incentive to keep playing it.

JONATHAN



△ *This happens if you start to nod off while playing Cruis'n.*



△ *First place, then. And cor – look. It's a girl!*



△ *Try as you might, the cars just won't break. The same can't be said for our cart, though, which now lies in several bits.*

EXTRA VEHICLES!
Hold down the Left C, Bottom C and Right C on the car selection screen and move left and right to add a police car, a jeep and a school bus (pronounced *"school bus"*) to your choice of vehicles.



BONUS TRACKS
To have a crack at Golden Gate Park, Indiana and San Francisco without having to race through all the other courses first, go to the course selection screen and hold Left C, Bottom C and L, OR Top C, Right C and L, OR Right C, Bottom C and L.



MORE TIPS!
Turn to our tips section for more *Cruis'n USA* cheats.

5 VISUALS
Faithful to the coin-op, but that's pretty awful.

4 SOUNDS
Really dreadful music.

3 MASTERY
A SNES could do this.

3 LIFESPAN
26 minutes.

VERDICT
Basically solid, but a pale shadow of the much-better *Mario Kart*.

34%

ACCESSIBILITY

You really do have to know how to play Mah Jong already.

VISUALS 3

Jolly nice rendered tiles.

SOUNDS 5

Late night Radio 2 and the click, click of little plastic things.

MASTERY 4

64-bit power means this plays a mean hand. We suspect.

LIFESPAN 6

Potentially infinite.

VERDICT

Okay so it's Mah Jong. What's so wrong about that, eh?

69%



ON THE N64 VIDEO



Don't be fooled, the Mah Jong Groove Network isn't as groovy as it likes to think. In fact, it's barely breathing.

Good move sir! That's the third Melded Triplet you've had this evening. Quite amazing.



MAH JONG MASTER

Ahh... We hear the sounds of sparrows clattering.

When you've got a Concealed Pung lined up, you've just completed your third Kong and your picking from the Dead Wall, you could be forgiven for thinking that Konami have finally given the N64 its own version of *Twinbee* and not some tawdry old Chinese card game.

But as Seta's *Shogi Chess* proved, there are more than enough lonely board gamers out there, so what could be better than a N64 cart packed with a motley collection of Mah Jong 'masters' eager to take you for every yen you've got. Add a risible story mode and you've got every housebound Mah Jong player's dream.

There are absolutely no huge weapons though.

WIL

Mah Jong Master		
KONAMI		
Japan	64M	1-4
Controller Pak back-up	~~Cartridge back-up~~	Out now
		UK release Unlikely
¥9800 (Approx £50)		

Egad! It looks like the winds have prevailed in your direction. You surely are Oj Zu!



VISUALS 3

Old-style 2D, but great animations and smart reflections.

SOUNDS 5

Bursting with effects and commentary.

MASTERY 4

The 2D isn't exactly N64, but it's just like the coin-op.

LIFESPAN 6

We'll never be playing it again.

VERDICT

Excellent basketball, but we'd rather play football.

52%



Five hours later, the boys still couldn't work out why the ball wouldn't stay in the net.

NBA HANGTIME

A great basketball game, but a basketball game nevertheless.

Game of basketball, anyone? Thought not. While our American chums go wild over *NBA* games, we just can't summon up the same enthusiasm for them in the N64 office. So this month, whenever more than two people have simultaneously come into the proximity of an N64, it's *Mario Kart* or *J-League Perfect Striker* that's been popped into the cartridge slot rather than *NBA Hangtime*.

I've been reduced to playing it against the computer, then. And I've found that if I really concentrate I can stay ahead, foiling CPU attacks about half the time and scoring every time I have the ball. And then, as boredom begins to take a grip in around the third quarter, I start failing to stop the CPU players and they score all the time. A traditional basketball deadlock results, with me scoring, then him, then me, then him, and so on until my head begins to nod forwards. At that point my players start to get intercepted by the CPU ones, and the computer begins edging ahead on the scoreboard. And that's it. The same thing happens every time I play. It's not fun, or anything. I've been raised on a diet of wide-open football games, and to me, the two-man teams feel meagre and the tiny court claustrophobic.

Undoubtedly, *NBA Hangtime* is the best arcade-style basketball game in the world, with huge, well-animated characters (albeit 2D ones), lightning speed, subtle controls with copious special moves, lots of arcadey ball-catching-fire-type touches, and enormous potential for cheat codes, custom players and all that sort of thing. It evokes memories of the happy days I spent with the Mega Drive's *NBA Jam* (to which *Hangtime* is in every way superior). But that was on the Mega Drive, when the only alternative was *Sonic the Hedgehog*. We've got far more enjoyable things to do with our shiny new Nintendo 64s.

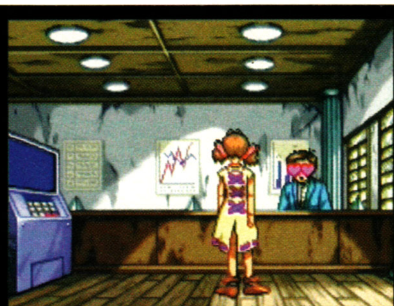
So sorry, America. We'll take *Perfect Striker*, and you can keep your basketball game. Thanks all the same.

JONATHAN

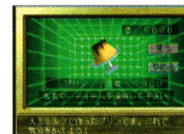
NBA Hangtime		
WILLIAMS BALLY MIDWAY		
USA	64M	1-4
~~Controller Pak back-up~~	On cartridge back-up	Out now
		UK release TBA
$80 (Approx £50)		



Josette generally gets a kick out of visiting the nearby woods. It reminds her of Corolo, her home, you see.

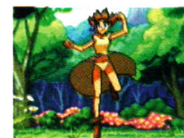


Don't fall for it Josette! He falls in love with every girl he sees.



CALM DOWN

If you keep being deliberately nasty to Josette she'll eventually get a strop on, start acting moody and refuse to co-operate. A quick way to get her back on form is to bribe her with a 3D pudding. Works every time.



Wonder Project J2		
ENIX/GIVIO		
Japan	64M	1
Controller Pak back-up	~~Cartridge back-up~~	Out now
¥9800 (Approx £50)		UK release Unlikely



WONDER PROJECT J2

Wanted: Father figure for naive robot girl. No experience necessary.

Maybe the publishers of Japan's number one RPG thought they were being particularly inscrutable when they decided on their first N64 game. Rather than go for some 3D *Dragon Quest* tie-in, thereby ensuring instant success, Enix plumped for a 2D sequel to one of their lesser-known SNES titles. Yep, it could really only be… *Wonder Project J2*.

It's not so much a RPG as an interactive cartoon. By either praising or chastising, you must guide the Pinnochio-esqe Josette through the perils of life in Blue Land as she strives to become a 'real girl'. She can't see you but she trusts what you say and for the most part will act on and learn from whatever you tell her. Eventually she'll cotton-on to the right way to approach problems and… bingo! Her little experience meter goes up a couple of percent.

As if feeling guilty at having all that 64-bit power at their disposal and not really using it, *J2* does make a stab at integrating some action 3D sequences into the proceedings. Unfortunately they turn out to be boring maze wandering affairs that the game could well do without.

Yes, getting Josette to go and do what you want can get frustrating and you *will* get laughed at by your *Turok* mates, but if your tastes run to the slightly esoteric and you've got far too much money it's an intriguing title that'll probably never see the light of day over here.

WIL

She's an inquisitive girl, forever asking her invisible mentor (that's you) questions. She'll want an answer as well. That means a yes, no or just a stoney silence.



Your link to Josette's world, Bird, takes a 3D treat from the inventory.



Depending on how you respond to her actions, Josette will eventually learn. EVENTUALLY.





No-one seems to want to know Blue Land's latest resident. Ahhhhh…



When you're starting out poor old Josette can't even walk properly. Shame.

ACCESSIBILITY (Japan → UK)

Understanding small artificial Japanese girls asking you questions like "Do you believe in god?" means your kanji will definitely need to be up to scratch here.

7 VISUALS

Glorious 2D artwork that outshines the occasional, ropy 3D bit.

4 SOUNDS

Twee tunes that definitely won't get your toes tapping.

3 MASTERY

Is *J2* doing something incredibly clever here that it's just not telling us?

7 LIFESPAN

Getting Josette to be 100% human will take a fair while – especially if you can't read Japanese.

VERDICT

An interesting attempt at something new, but it doesn't quite come off.

55%

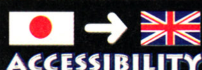


KING OF PRO BASEBALL

Imagineer's first N64 game has had the frightening Munster treatment...

HANG ON!
If you really want a baseball game, it might be a good idea to hang on for *Konami's Power Pro Baseball 4*. The game's out now in Japan (we should have a review next issue) and, to be honest, it looks a lot better than this.

Pro-Baseball King		
IMAGINEER		
Japan	64M	1-4
~~Controller Pak back-up~~	On cartridge back-up	Out now
¥9800 (Approx £50)		UK release Unlikely



ACCESSIBILITY
In-game you can scrape by, but the options are impenetrable.

VISUALS 7
Unashamedly unadventurous, but the fat-headed players make for a nice change.

SOUNDS 7
The sound stretches to a manic Japanese commentator and some pleasurable cheering.

MASTERY 4
Does nothing that couldn't be done elsewhere. Just look at the crowd in the stadium.

LIFESPAN 7
Fun with two players, but the faults eventually do for it.

VERDICT
Initially great fun, but the longer you play, the more annoying the players become.

68%

The players featured in this truly strange game are actually super-deformed cartoon versions of real life baseball players. Nice touch, that. Ohyesitis.

Of course, it's difficult to get excited by the fact that Yin Ru-Lang has been turned into a polygonal freak – with a humungous head, cucumber eyes and fat little legs – if the relative safety of Eric Cantona is where your sporting knowledge begins and ends. But imagine, if you will, said Frenchman being turned from the strapping, football-hungry, power-monkey he currently is, into a four inch high yellow-headed abomination. Now that would make for a bit of a treat, wouldn't it…?

Which probably explains this game's appeal to its intended audience of recent Japanese baseball converts. But it deserves attention from Western players too, thanks to its humourous and, dare we say, 'fun' approach to the sometimes deathly serious sport of baseball. And when there are two or even four of you, it takes on the sort of multi-player joy that make *Mario Kart* and *Perfect Striker* such blissfully happy romps.

The options in *King of Pro Baseball* run to tens of screens but, sadly, lack the kind of Japlish that make other Far-Eastern sports games, such as *St Andrews*, more easily accessible. Still, carefully padding your way through the confusion of the squad set-up, team select and player positioning screens will rapidly result in you pitting your wits against a second player. The tactical screens offer a wealth of *ISSD*-like playing strategies – which is commendable – and, if you can sort out your short squiggles from your long squiggles, you're onto a winner. Otherwise, you'll have to console yourself with the untampered sight of the default pitcher and batter.

Pitching won't prove too much of a problem, as swerve and speed can be pulled off without worry. The batting tests the patience of even the most saintly gamesplayer, but the game's real downfall is the players' lack of running pace. The sheer frustration of watching your pork-chop-legged player struggling to first base, only to be run out *every* time, is the sort of torture Reservoir Dogs revelled in. And it doesn't stop there. Often the yellow buttons – used to run players between bases – seem to confuse proceedings further by sending their fat little bottoms back and forth and then subsequently to the dug-out. Impressing the virtues of baseball on the British public will prove hard enough without niggles like these.

Pro-Baseball King is a worthy attempt, but it's never looks likely to convert the uninitiated. As a result, unless you're a truly fanatical follower of the sport, it certainly isn't worth a £50 investment.

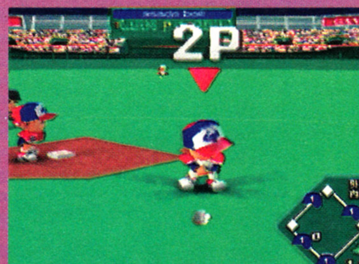
TIM



△ *Hit the ball, and the camera pans quickly out to follow it.*



△ *15 teams of varying abilities. We favour the Buffaloes.*



△ *Bases loaded! Time to get the ball 'back to home' as quickly as possible.*



TIPS EXTRA

Every page of N64 Magazine is stuffed with useful tips. But there are still some last-minute, stop-press ones we just couldn't squeeze in elsewhere. Here they all are...

NEW HIGH SCORE!

After reviewing the game this issue, James reckons he's pretty hot stuff at *Shadows of the Empire*. So much so in fact, that he's getting just a tiny bit boring about it. "Have you seen my new time on the Battle of Hoth?" No we haven't, but we promise to have a look.

We're sure that at least some of you will be able to put James thoroughly in his place. If you can beat his time on the Hoth Battle (detailed below), send us a photo of your end of level summary screen to:

High Score!
N64 Magazine,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath,
BA1 2BW

We'll print the best time next month and reward the skillfull winner with a fine Super Pad Plus from Spectra Video. Featuring all the controls of Nintendo's original in a more accessible shape, the Super Pad is truly the pad of the professional games player.

THIS MONTH'S SCORE TO BEAT:



Shadows of the Empire
3 minutes 13 seconds on the Battle of Hoth, difficulty level Medium, and ALL challenge points collected.

CRUIS'N USA
(Midway)

NITROUS BOOST
(This code works only with your vehicle on the fourth level.)
Follow the Hotline's instructions for flashing lights over the page, holding Analogue Left for about 35 seconds until the head comes rolling across. Using any car in any race, you can now get a Nitrous Boost by pressing Brake, Brake, Brake, Gas, Brake, Gas. You can only use this once for every checkpoint passed.

KILLER INSTINCT GOLD
(Nintendo)

100% COMBOS
Set 'Early Ultimates' to 'On' in the level four options. Beat up your opponent until his first energy bar has disappeared, and when he gets up perform any combo ending with an Ultimate. All 99% of their second life bar will be drained giving you an easy 99% combo. If 'Knockdowns' are turned on and 'Cheap Juggles' are turned off, the game will allow you to register your initials.

SELECT LEVEL/MUSIC IN TWO-PLAYER MODE
As you select your character, press the following sequences of buttons. The first person to pick their character chooses the scene and the second chooses the music.

Up + FP	Spaceship (Glacius)
Up + MP	Jungle (Maya)
Up + QP	Castle (Sabrewulf)
Up + FK	Helipad (Orchid)
Up + MK	Museum (Fulgore)
Up + QK	Stonehenge (Tusk)
Down + FP	Street (TJ Combo)
Down + MP	Dungeon (Gargos)
Down + QP	Bridge (Jago)
Down + FK	Nothing
Down + MK	Spinal Ship (Spinal)
Down + QK	Dojo (Kim Wu)

PILOTWINGS 64
(Nintendo)

STAR LOCATIONS
Holiday Island: Under the natural arch on the beach.
Cresent Island: In a hidden cove on the beach.
Little States Island: In Central Park in New York.



Arctic Island: Deep inside the cave that the big waterfall comes out of. Mind yourself on those walls!

The star gives you the Birdman suit. All stars – with the exception of the one on Holiday Island – are nearly impossible to get without the jetpack.

REFUEL VEHICLES
On Little States Island, follow the road to the northwest from Cape Canaveral and you'll see a petrol station on your left. To refuel, fly low around this area until you hear the same noise you get when you take off from a pad.

Near the nuclear power plant (in the midwest) is a little town. If you fly into that town with either a rocketpack or the gyrocopter you can get a free refill of fuel by going under a little petrol station roof! This helps you a lot if you're just exploring, or are low on fuel for a mission, and you'll get bonus points for the fuel.

MAXIMUM SCORE ON JUMBLE HOPPER, MISSION 3
Jump between the building you start on and the building in front. Go through the door in front of you and out of the next. You'll now be teleported to near to the end of the level, allowing you to score 100 every time.

WAVE RACE 64
(Nintendo)

SAME-COLOURED RACER IN TWO-PLAYER MODE
Use controller two to decide which racer you are going to use in the 'Vs.' Mode, ensuring that the first player's cursor is on an adjacent racer. Press Up on the D-Pad or analogue joystick on controller two and Start to have player one's default colour. On controller one, press Analogue or D-Pad Right and Start at almost the same time. You can start the race with both players having the same color. To have both players use player two's default colour, repeat these instructions using opposite joypads.

MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY
(Midway)

ULTIMATE KOMBAT KODES

To enter an Ultimate Kombat Kode at any time during 'Attract' mode, simply rotate your joystick or D-pad clockwise once or twice. The screen will now change as if you've just finished a game and allow you to enter an Ultimate Kombat Kode!

788-322 Fast uppercut recovery
044-440 No power
300-300 Silent Kombat
100-100 Throwing Disabled
010-010 Throwing Encouraged
020-020 Blocking Disabled
205-205 Winner fights Smoke
769-342 Winner fights Noob
969-141 Winner fights Shao Kahn
033-564 Winner fights Motaro
444-444 Randper Kombat
282-282 No Fear
987-666 Flipper message
550-550 Wavenet UMK3 message
999-999 Version Number message
448-844 "Don't jump at me.."
717-313 Rain is in the Graveyard
122-221 "Skunky!"
004-400 Ed Boon message
987-123 No Powerbars
688-422 Dark fighting
985-125 Psycho kombat
642-468 Play hidden game
788-322 Uppercut Recovery
466-466 Unlimited running
321-789 Super Run Jumps
975-310 Health Recovery
722-722 Combos Disabled
555-556 Special Moves Disabled
024-689 Super Endurance Kombat

New for MKT

484-484 Automatic Kombos
109-901 Bloody Kombat
202-808 "Babalities Are Reversible"
123-321 Winner Fights Khameleon
246-246 Play Pong

For 2-on-2 and 3-on-3 only:
022-220 Explosive Kombat/Throwing Disabled
227-227 Explosive Kombat
330-033 Kombat Zone:Jade's Desert
666-444 Scorpion's Lair
091-190 Bell Tower
666-333 Graveyard
933-933 Sizlac Busorez
880-088 Subway
343-343 The Roof
820-028 Pit III
004-700 Kahn's Kave
002-003 River Kombat
050-050 Noob's Dorfen Hidden
600-040 Kombat Temple
079-035 The Street
123-901 The Soul Chamber
077-022 The Bridge
880-220 Kahn's Tower

New for MKT

222-222 Dead Pool
191-191 The Armory
919-919 The Pit
606-606 Star Bridge
101-010 The Tower
007-007 The Portal
166-661 The Pit II
121-121 The Courtyard
212-212 The Wasteland
000-666 The Lair

SHAO KHAN'S TREASURES

Top Row: (from Left to Right) Ending, Galaxia, Fight Ermac, Fight Noob Saibot, Random Prize, Fatality Demo 1, Brutality Demo 2, Fatality Demo 7, Noob and Ermac Endurance round, MK2 Classic Endurance, Mega Endurance, and Old School Kombat.

Bottom Row (from left to right): Play Pong, Male Ninja Kombat, Animality Demo 1, Brutality Demo 1, Friendship Demo 1, Fight Khameleon, Fatality Demo 4, Anamality Demo 2, Female Ninja Kombat, Supreme Demonstration, Play Space Invaders, and the Secrets of Trilogy.

The treasures you can select depends on the level at which you finished the game. On the Novice Tower you can select the first five (up to Random Prize). On the Warrior Tower you can select the first 11 (up to Mega Endurance Kombat). On the Master Tower and the Eight-Player Kombat you can select up to the bottom row, fifth choice (Friendship Demo 1). On the Champion Tower you can select up to the bottom row, 11th choice (Space Invaders), and on the Super Endurance Path mode and on the Champion Tower you can select all of the Treasures.

UNLIMITED CREDITS

Enter D, D, U, U, R, R, L, L at the story screen. You'll hear a noise if you did the code correctly. When you lose your next battle, your remaining kredits window will say 'freeplay'.



JOHNNY CAGE'S THREE-HEAD PUNCH OFF

While doing the Head Punch Off fatality with Johnny Cage, hold HP, BLK and LP all at once. Johnny Cage will then punch three heads off!

EXPLODING BABIES

Perform the Babality move, and when the screen turns black and your opponent turns into a baby, hold HP, LP, HK and LK. Continue to hold these buttons until the baby explodes. Great.

Secret stunts

DOUBLE FLIP STUNT

Speed towards a ramp and, when you're almost at the top, push the joystick forward and then pull it back to do a flip as normal. But then, against your better instincts, hold it back until you've done another complete flip. Hopefully you'll pull out before you hit the water.
Score: Over 2000 points if you get it spot-on.

HELICOPTER STUNT

When you're on the ramp, turn sharply diagonal Left/Up or diagonal Right/Up, and then hold Down to (hopefully) do a sideways flip.
Score: Around 1700 points.

HELICOPTER INTO FLIP STUNT

Do the helicopter stunt as listed above but hold Down for longer. This will produce a helicopter-like move initially, but will then turn into an upright position and flip again.
Score: Around 2500 points, and possibly more.

TRIPLE FLIP

(This stunt can only be done in Glacier Park on the big ramp with J. Meter.) Hardest of all, follow the instructions for the double jump but then keep holding the joystick back for, outrageously, a triple flip. Near-impossible, but rewarded well.
Score: A whopping 3000 points.

YOUR TOP 10 TIPS

Found an interesting cheat, tip, secret bit or quirky thing to do in one of your latest games? Then send it to us immediately! And from next month we'll compile a top 10 of the best. If you make it in, you'll win yourself a rather flash N64 pin badge. And if you get the coverted Number 1 slot we'll send you something just a little bit special.



HERE'S MY TOP 10 TIP...

It's for [game name]:

And I've found that if you:

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

....

Post code ....

Send to: Tips Extra, N64 Magazine, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW
If you don't want to cut up your magazine send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room.





You're through to... THE NINTENDO

For two pages of N64 Magazine each month, we'll be handing you over to the experts at the Nintendo's official Hotline. They'll be able to solve any N64 problems you might be having, and will also be disclosing any secrets they discover. Over to them, then...

Hello and welcome to the Nintendo Hotline's regular tips page here in N64 Magazine! The Nintendo 64 has reached these shores in a deluge of anticipation. And the Hotline have been swotting up on their backfilps and Bowser-busting techniques in readiness for the new onslaught of eager gamers ringing our lines. Excitement reached fever pitch as March 1st arrived, especially as some new staff have joined the fold to cope with the increased demand, bringing with them their own brand of overflowing enthusiasm (the unknowing fools).

WHAT IS THE NINTENDO HOTLINE?

We're a team of expert games players who use our vast knowledge of all things Nintendo to help gamers in distress. Staff selection is very strict, so you can always be confident that when you talk to a councillor, they are one of the finest gamesplayers in the country and the perfect coach for your gaming skills.

Open seven days a week, 365 days of the year, the Hotline deals with over 2000 calls a day, spread over the various Nintendo platforms. To guarantee that your call will be answered quickly and your problem answered swiftly, we have doubled our staff and increased our weekend opening hours.

Call us on **(01703) 652222** (NOT a premium rate number) and pose your game questions. We should be able to provide you with the answers, whether they're directions, cheats, passwords or simple advice. The Hotline is open Monday to Friday 12pm to 8pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10am to 6pm.

PROBLEMS...

Games are meant to be tricky, but it's awful getting completely stuck. That's where the Hotline come in, with their telephone advice and also this bit of **N64** Magazine, where each month they'll be providing answers to the questions they're getting asked the most often.

Top 10 Super Mario 64 questions you've asked this month

Q Where's the Red Switch Palace in Mario 64?

A After collecting at least 10 stars, go to the entrance of the castle and stand in the sunlight that casts down onto the picture of the sun. Look up into the sunlight to warp into the course.



Q Where's Luigi?

A Luigi makes his N64 debut in *Mario Kart 64*, and isn't in *Mario 64*.

Q What do I do with the wooden posts in course 13?

A If you run around a post several times you'll receive five Yellow Coins, which ought to come in handy, eh?

Q How do I get the star that's behind Bow Wow?

A Use your pound attack to knock down the wooden post which holds Bow Wow's chain.



Q How do I get out of the Pyramid in course 8?

A You will exit the Pyramid when you locate a Star inside it. You can also choose to 'exit the course' or lose a life, but Mario will always re-enter the Pyramid if you re-enter the course.

Q What do you do in the mirror room?

A Walk forward to the large mirrored wall, and you'll see an extra picture in the mirror that's not actually there. Go to the left and jump into the blank square wall where the picture would be to enter course 10.

Q How do you find Yoshi?

A After collecting 120 Stars, the gate will disappear and reveal a Cannon hole. If you step into the Cannon, you can shoot yourself to the rooftop of the castle. Once on top of the castle, you can locate your old buddy Yoshi and catch up on all his news.

☎ (01703) 652222

HOTLINE

Q How many stars are there to find?

A There are 120 stars in the game altogether, although you only need 70 to finish it.

Q What do I do with the baby penguin at the bottom on the mountain on course 4?

A Nothing. If you return him to the mother penguin, she'll just say that he's not one of hers.

Q I've lost my cap! How do I get it back?

A There are only three places that you can lose your cap. Fortunately, you can always re-enter the course where you lost it to get it back again.

Course 8: Shifting Sand Land
If the Big Bird gets too close, it will take Mario's cap. In order to get it back, you must jump into the bird as it flies by. If you exit the course without the cap, you can always re-enter it later and get it back from the bird.

Course 10: Snowman's Land
If the giant snowman on the top of the mountain blows you off the side, you'll lose your cap. Search the area around the ice building to get it back. If you can't find it, re-enter the course, then walk around until you see a Spinning Snowman wearing it. Slowly walk around the Snowman until it falls over, and then grab your cap.

Course 12: Tall Tall Mountain
If you get too close to the small cloud on the mountain, it will blow you and your cap off the side. To get your cap back, climb back up the mountain and take it from the monkey.

Note: When Mario isn't wearing his cap he takes more damage than usual.

HOTLINE TIPS Some things we've found.

CRUIS'N USA
(Midway)

SECRET CARS
You can choose from three extra courses not normally found on the Race Select screen.

Instructions
On the Car Select screen, hold down Left C, Bottom C and Top C and move the analogue stick from car to car. You'll notice that the ATV, School Bus and Police Car are now available.

SECRET COURSES
Choose from three extra courses not normally found on the Race Select screen.

Instructions
To race on the following courses, hold the specific buttons and press Start.
Golden Gate Park: Hold L, Left C and Bottom C.
Indiana: Hold L, Top C and Right C.
San Francisco: Hold L, Right C and Bottom C.

FLASHING LIGHTS
You can make the lights flash on the Police Car or School Bus (no others).

Instructions
After you put your initials in on the Hot Times screen, you can press either up or down to scroll through the times. If you go all the way to the bottom to the metal rollers and hold Analogue Left for about 35 seconds, a face of one of the designers will appear and say "I love this job."

After he's said this, when you're racing with either the Police Car or School Bus, press Brake twice and Gas once, the lights will flash as long as you hold the accelerator down. As soon as you let go of the gas, the lights will go off.

KILLER INSTINCT GOLD
(Nintendo)

PLAY AS GARGOS
Play as the game's boss, Gargos.

Instructions
Turn on the game, wait until any of the bio screeens appear and then press Z, A, R, Z, A, B, then Start. Gargos will laugh when the code has been entered correctly.

SKY STAGE
It's possible to fight in the special sky stage where you can be knocked off the edge at any time during the match. This code is given to you once you've beaten the game on the hardest level.

Instructions
While on the two-player character select screen, hold Analague Down on both control pads and press Medium Kick when selecting your character.

SPECIAL COLOURS
This code allows you to choose three additional colours for you character without having to beat Training on the hardest level. The new colours are gold, white and and a rather fetching shadow.

Instructions
Turn on the game, wait until any of the character bio screens appear and press Z, B, A, Z, A, L and Start. A voice will say "Welcome" when the code is entered correctly.

ENABLE ALL OPTIONS
This code allows you to access all five special options without having to beat each training level.

Instructions
Turn on the game, wait until any of the character bio screens appear and press Z, B, A, L, Z and Start. A voice will say "Perfect!" when the code is entered correctly.

SEE END CREDITS
View the end credits.

Instructions
Turn on the game, wait until any of the Character Bio Screens appear and press Z, L, A, Z, A, R and Start. The credits will automatically appear when the code is entered correctly.

SUPER MARIO 64
(Nintendo)

IMMORTALITY TRICK
(Only tested on Japanese cart.) Mario becomes immortal, in a roundabout sort of way.

Instructions
If you collect 1000 coins from any of the three Bowsers, each time Mario loses a life he will gain a 1-Up. In contrast he will lose a life each time he eats a 1-Up mushroom.

EXTRA CAP TRICK
(Only tested on US cart.) Get extra caps for Mario.

Instructions
If you enter course 10: Snowman's Land and allow yourself to be blown off the top of the Giant Snowman Mountain, you'll lose your cap. Once you've lost it, you can warp between the two trees near the frozen pond. Each time you warp, a new cap will appear on top of the first one. If you collect the cap after doing this, you'll see another on the ground. Collect the second cap and Mario will hold onto it until he exits the level. N64



Holidays for old people? No, the letters page. And, it has to be said, few magazines are inundated with letters before they've published so much as a single issue. But millions of you have already written in to say hello, alerted to N64 Magazine's arrival by a bit in GamesMaster.

this month...



Write to us at:
Club 64, **N64** Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW
Fax: 01225 732275 e-mail: n64@futurenet.co.uk
Any letters printed win a prized N64 Magazine badge!

"It really is kind of scary"

I've followed the progress of the N64 since the days of Project Reality, and over the years I've learnt to appreciate what is, as you so rightly say, "the pinnacle of mankind's gaming achievements in the late 20th century". It's just so radically different to any other console available, it really is kind of scary.

Take a game like *Hexen 64*. On the Saturn it runs quite smoothly, with graphics similar to the PC original. Now look at the same game on the N64. The graphics have improved – there's no pixellation, for instance – it runs smoother than the PC version, and such is the superior power of the machine, it even manages to create a four-player split-screen death match, with all the above features still intact.

It's when you make comparisons like this that you really recognise the way this one machine will change the world of video games forever. And don't worry – it will.

Zoheir Beig
South Harrow

And, moreover, you just plug in the cart and switch on the N64 and it works. No fiddling with control panels and AUTOEXEC.BAT files. No polishing of CDs with your grubby sleeve. No screens full of incomprehensible error messages. No having to restart the entire machine in a slightly different graphics mode. It's bliss. **Ed**



"A tiny bit ripped"

Well, nearly one month to wait until two years of prayers are answered, and Nintendo's Uberconsole finally hits the stores, and although I can't picture myself on March 1st being anywhere other than in a massive queue outside Virgin Megastore, I'm still feeling uneasy about buying an N64 on the release day.

We all know the story. It's probably happened with every console, especially the PlayStation. Console gets released at a premium price, everyone rushes to be the first to buy one, and in a few months the price falls, leaving everyone feeling just a tiny bit ripped off. I've had this done to me before with the SNES and with the Mega Drive, and I don't fancy it happening again, but I bet it will.

I've been waiting for ages for an N64, and so far I've resisted buying an import. (I was tempted by a mate's American version.) But I've bitten my nails down to my knuckles in frustration, and I don't think I can wait any longer. If the N64 doesn't sell out on the first day, I'll be quietly surprised.

Andy Pearce
Pontefract

Of course it'll happen. It's what always happens. The video games industry even has a name for people like us – 'early adopters'. We're prepared to pay just about anything to be among the first with a new console, and they love us for it. The rascals. Oh well. At least in the case of the N64 it's worth it. **Ed**

"Copy of the wonderful"



I've just received my copy of the wonderful *Perfect Striker* by Konami. It's better than any PlayStation or Saturn football game.

Brian Brown
Birmingham

You had to mention it, didn't you? 5-1. Sob. **Ed**

"Producing a smaller game"

Having owned a SNES for four years, I'm now an avid Nintendo supporter. But I think they may have made a mistake in going with cartridges.

Nintendo are obviously superb programmers, as is shown by them fitting *SM64* into 64 Mbit, but I suspect that this was helped by the fact that, as *Mario* is cartoony, it didn't need as many textures as a

So tell me this...

Is something bothering you about the world of Nintendo 64? Then write to us, as a couple of people already have, and we'll almost certainly be able to help.

1. Will any of these games come out for the N64, and if not why not: *Spacehulk, Need For Speed, Command & Conquer, Quake* and *Resident Evil 1* and *2*?
2. I have heard about a VR headset for the N64. Is this true?
3. Can the N64 play video graphics, like intros for games? I doubt this, because of the N64 using cartridges and not CDs, leading me on to my next question: Is there going to be a CD-ROM add-on? (Please say yes.)
Stephen Madeley

1. Quake is definitely on its way, and will hopefully be out at the end of this year. Command & Conquer and Resident Evil are both possible, although neither Westwood nor Capcom have yet said they'll definitely be publishing for N64. And Spacehulk and Need for Speed are unlikely, as they're a bit old and forgotten.
2. We've heard nothing about one, and tend to regard VR headsets as an early '90s phenomenon.
3. The N64 isn't really suited to pre-rendered video, as that requires the cavernous storage of CDs. Instead, though, it can use its 3D powers to generate graphics in real-time – like the intro to Super Mario 64 and Mario Kart 64's end sequence – that look better than other machines' pre-rendered stuff.
The 64DD is the nearest we'll get to a CD add-on.

1. I own a Japanese N64, and would like to play US/UK games on it. Has anyone yet developed a converter, or would I have to send my machine to a specialist mail order company for conversion?
2. I've heard rumours that if you remove a piece of plastic from your N64, it makes it universally compatible.
3. When is the Japanese version of *Turok* being released?
4. When is *Starfox 64* and the Jolt Pack being released?
David Smith, Folkestone

1. You can get a US/Japanese adaptor from Fire on 01302 751428. We'll have news about UK adaptors next month, hopefully.
2. It's true! See page XXX for instructions.
3. The Japanese Turok is due on 28th March, so it ought to be available about now.
4. Starfox 64 should be out, along with the Force Pak (as they're calling it now), in Japan in April, towards the end of June in the US, and in the UK sometime after that.

1. I haven't got a SCART socket on my TV and I've been getting this idea that if I get a video machine with a SCART socket on it, it would give the same effect as having a SCART socket on my TV. Is this correct?
2. How much will *Wave Race 64* cost when it comes out in April?
3. Is it worth getting more than two controllers before titles like *Mario Kart 64, Starfox 64* and other multiplayer games come out later in the year?
4. Will there be any light gun shoot-'em-up games for the N64?
Joe Runnacles, Ipswich

1. That would work fine. The only snag is, if you then connect an N64 to the telly using an ordinary RF lead, the quality will be no better than if you'd just connected the N64 to the telly with the same lead in the first place.
2. £54.99, apparently.
3. There's unlikely to be a shortage of them then, if that's what you mean.
4. After the dismal titles that accompanied the SNES Super Scope, it's to be hoped not.

1. Please could you tell me the release dates of *Wave Race 64, International Superstar Soccer 64* and *Mario Kart 64?*
2. Are any shops doing packages or deals, maybe including an extra controller and a game.
3. Do I need to get the 64DD to play *Zelda 64?*

1. Mid-April, June, and June.
2. Not to our knowledge – there's no need at the moment.
3. . It would appear not. See pages 10/11 for more info.

Flummoxed? Fear not. Send your questions to: So Tell Me This…, N64 Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.



game set in real life. If developers want to set their games in a version of real life, they're going to have to use a lot more detailed textures. This would naturally use a lot of space, and and developers would be faced with a choice of (a) a bigger cartridge, or (b) making the game smaller. Faced with this choice, and if Nintendo's pricing policies remain the same, then developers are probably going to go with producing a smaller game. After all, this means less work for them. *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* with its eight levels is a case in point here.
Peter Ford
Paignton

Turok? Tiny? Tish. It's got eight absolutely massive levels, each one thronging with more enormous, intricately detailed dinosaurs than you'd find in the whole of Eastbourne. In fact, if you hold the cart up to your ear and listen carefully you can hear them having battles. Nope, if N64 programmers fancy an extra couple of hours' kip in the morning they're going to have to find a better excuse than that. **Ed**

"Quite funny"

How about running a competition in which people send in their favourite photos from *Pilotwings 64?* It'll be great!

Also , have you noticed that when you complete a perfect lap of *Wave Race 64*, and the commentator says "No misses – beautiful!", it sounds a bit like "Your Mrs is beautiful!" Quite funny, really.
Robert Curd, New Malden

Fractionally funnier than Bob Monkhouse was at the Nintendo 64 launch party. If anyone's got any favourite Pilotwings 64 photos they're welcome to send them in. Maybe we could give a prized N64 badge to the best one. **Ed**

"Early releases surpass them"

I already own an American Nintendo 64, and think it's the most technically superior games console I've ever played. I've owned a Mega Drive, a SNES and a PlayStation, and although the PlayStation had some pretty ace games, the Nintendo's early releases surpass them. I own *Super Mario 64* and think it's the most playable game to date. *Killer Instinct Gold* is superb, and *Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey* is very good fun indeed.
Richard Watkinson
Pembroke Dock

I used to go to Pembroke Dock on holiday. Its heavilypopulated rock pools are unmatched anywhere else in the UK. **Ed**



WHAT YOU WANT, WHAT YOU REALLY, REALLY WANT

Rather than just, like, doing the magazine, we thought we'd find out what your ideal Nintendo 64 magazine would contain.

There should be Zy Nicholson in it as a reviewer.
Dreier Christian
Vessy, Switzerland

But of course.

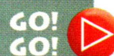
I would love it so much if you could print it in your first or second mag, or before *Killer Instinct Gold* is released in the UK, all the *KI Gold* moves, including ultimates, ultras and, best of all, everyone's fatalities, including Maya's drop-an-elephant-on-your-opponent one. Also, print some big combos to do during the bout itself. Don't print *MK Trilogy* moves because everyone knows them now, and they're just a waste of space and paper when you could be printing *Killer Instinct Gold* ultra combos and fatalities. Cheers!
Sam Tweed
Lincoln

You'll be delighted to learn that we'll definitely be doing a huge Killer Instinct Gold guide when the game comes out here. But – sorry – we'll also be covering all Mortal Kombat Trilogy's moves. In fact, we'll be finding out and printing everything there is to know about every major Nintendo 64 game. So, tough.

Have interviews with Nintendo and third parties.
Leighton James
S Wales

Sounds like a fine idea. This month we've chatted with Konami's Major A team (the first Westerners to do so), next month we'll hopefully be talking to Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto himself, and over the months to come you can expect to see N64 Magazine grilling all the major N64 developers till they're nice and brown.

You simply must get Wil Overton as Art Editor. His unique style typifies Nintendo – Japanese cuteness, but appealing to all ages. And be honest! If a game is crap, TELL US! Don't say a game is terrible and give it a score around 75% (something so many





WHAT YOU WANT, WHAT YOU REALLY, REALLY WANT



magazines are guilty of). I think 70-80% is a reasonable score, and certainly wouldn't put me off a possible purchase. If it's only worth 5% then let us know.
Steve Hargreaves
Manchester

We heartily agree, and will be using the full extent of the percentage scale when marking games. Crap ones will suffer terribly, while our Star Game medal will only be awarded to games that approach Super Mario 64 levels of entertainment and technical accomplishment. As for Wil, his burgeoning fan club will be delighted to spot him at the laying-out desk, surrounded by pictures of, er, school girls.

Don't be afraid to be funny. After all, people are buying this magazine to be entertained, aren't they? Otherwise, why are they buying video games?
Craig Young
via email

We're not afraid to be funny. It's just that we can't think of any jokes at the moment.

Most importantly, bring back LISA NICHOLLS. Wherever she may be.
Wai Foon Wong
Helensburgh

Lisa now runs a home for retired puppies and kittens in the country, and doesn't want to come back. But she does send her love, though.

Readers, I would think, are always curious about mag writers' gaming prowess, so print tables of best times and highest scores, along with an equivalent for readers.
Michael Barker
Norwich

Yep. We'll do that. Although, maybe 'prowess' isn't quite the right word in a couple of cases. Particularly when it comes to J-League Perfect Striker. Bah.

Maybe put a video on the first issue with exclusive footage of new games, like *Turok, Starfox, Mario Kart* etc.
David Smith
Folkestone

No sooner said than done.



"Unoriginal"

The front cover of the magazine looks childish, old-hat and very unoriginal. The anime cover designs of Super Play were so much more artisitic and eye-catching.
James Whitmarsh and James Garrett
Stansted

You've made Wil cry. **Ed**

"And almost fainted"

I have already got a Nintendo 64, and I'm really pleased with it. I got it when I was on holiday in Hong Kong. The shopkeeper was very helpful, asking where I came from so he didn't give me the wrong power lead, enabling me to play the machine straight away, because Hong Kong uses the same voltage as us.

I bought four games. *Super Mario 64:* a superb game, and hard, but you don't want them too simple, and it's very playable. *Cruis'n USA:* it's not bad. *Wave Race 64*: wow, what a game, superb; if this is the quality of games to come, then who needs a CD drive? And lastly, *Killer Instinct Gold:* superb, even better than the arcade.

In the next six months I'm planning to buy *Doom 64,* because I've played the PC and PlayStation versions and I've seen some N64 screenshots and almost fainted at the thought of an even better version.

The N64 should certainly give the PlayStation some competition, and will hopefully kill the Saturn off and end Sega's run – it'll certainly take them AGES this time to beat the N64.
Ian Harper
Northampton

Hong Kong? Phooey. And enough of your feeble Sega jokes. **Ed**

"Stop and he shives!"

Mario 64 pegnant penguin shock! Lose hat in iceworld (120 stars) then (stop and he shives!) go to snow slide and wayhay! (Star 2)
Mr D
Guernsey

Eh? Apply some of that snow to your forehead, I should. **Ed**

"A yellow control pad"

We're desperate to get out N64's in March. We've been waiting since we first heard about it in November 1994. We both started saving after Chrimbo, and have only got about £50 so far. We want to get *Mario 64* with the console, and I well badly want a yellow control pad. And I really badly want a red one.
James Whitmarsh and James Garrett
Stansted

If you don't calm down you'll get a burst one. **Ed**

"High scores"

Why not start a high scores page, like the early Super Plays? I've included my *Mario Kart 64* times to get you started:
Luigi Circuit: 1'50"27 with Bowser; best lap: 00'36"47
Mario Circuit: 01'27"90 with Donkey Kong; best lap: 00'28"84
Rup, London

We'll try to get something up and running next month. Meanwhile,the good news is that I've just sussed out the short-cut on Mario Circuit, shaving 4.12 seconds off my time. It's now a more respectable 1'20"43, using Kinopio. Now, if I can just get the little blighter to do it three times in a row… **Ed**

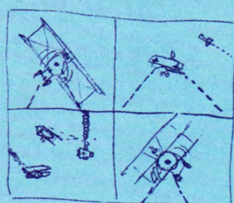




DREAM ON

This is the bit of N64 Magazine where you get to tell the world's Nintendo developers the games you dream of playing. Only, er, seeing it's the first issue we haven't had any suggestions yet. So here're our own dream games.

Jonathan: "Definitely a World War I fighter pilot game. Something along the lines of *Knights of the Sky* on the Amiga, brought up to date. The analogue joystick would be perfect for controlling a biplane, along with the C buttons to look around the sky. And the Force Pak could indicate bullet hits and when you were overstressing your airframe. There could be people running around on the ground and animals in the fields, all strafable. And the graphics would be as good as *Pilotwings's.* And naturally there'd be a four-player split-screen mode, which would be the best bit."



Wil: "I'd like an action RPG, with real depth, so you can change your stats and things. Like, in a normal turn-based one there are millions of spells and things, and I'd like that in a real-time action one. And I'd like a huge map that you can't see all of in about two seconds." And lots of Japanese text? "No… I'd actually prefer English text. But written properly, not by some idiot who makes everyone sound like they've just come out of the Bronx or something. Yeah, and when you walk around a village, people must say something different every time you talk to them, not just the same thing over and over again no matter what time of day it is."

James: "Being a big *Doom* game fan, I'd like see a four-player split-screen *Doom*-type game." *Hexen,* then. "Oh yes. Great. Er, in that case, I'd like it to be time travelling as well, so you fight through the Roman Empire, World War 1 and so on, a bit like in *Time Commando* on the PC."

Tim: "It would be –" A football game? "– a football game, like *J-League Perfect Striker* – so really playable and everything – only with management as well, like *Premier Manager*. So you could do bungs and things. And if you're not happy with a player, you can kill him." What? "You can hire an assassin and kill him."

The moment you wake up, jot down your dream game and send it to: Dream On, N64 Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Any printed win an N64 badge.

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DIRECTORY

Directory 64 is your complete guide to every game we've ever reviewed in N64 Magazine. It's divided into two sections – UK releases and imports – depending on the type of cart we reviewed. If a game gets a re-review for its official UK release, its Import Directory entry will be removed and a new entry made in the British section. Got it? Splendid.

How it works

The game's name

Its publisher

If it's an import, whether it's a US or Japanese one

A summary of our review

The best tip or cheat, and any issues we've done guides in.

Special Moth 64

Supercarts | UK release: Ages away | £50 | N64 1 ● 90% ● FB

A marvellous game that's had us playing it non-stop ever since it arrived in the office. Breathtakingly realistic 3D graphics, a staggering split-screen four-player mode, and music we're humming in our sleep. And we're still only half-way through it. If you could take this game intravenously, the streets of Britain would be filled with game junkies lying listless with strange lights shining behind their eyes. Probably.



• To get the golden carrot on level 4, whisper 'Go to Belgium' in the elephant's ear.

The reviewers initials (see below)

Score

The issue we reviewed it in

How much it costs

N64 reviewers

JA = James Ashton
MH = Marcus Hawkins
WO = Wil Overton
JD = Jonathan Davies
TW = Tim Weaver
ZN = Zy Nicholson

UK Games DIRECTORY



PILOTWINGS 64



Nintendo £50 | N64 1 ● 89% ● TW

The first *Pilotwings* split gamers opinions with its floaty, airbound subject matter. However, this 64-bit refurbishment is likely to have a much wider appeal than the SNES original. Incorporating the sublime talents of flight sim specialists Paradigm and Nintendo's usual playable sheen, *Pilotwings 64* emerges as a supreme example of how to harness the N64's potential.



● The four Birdman Stars are situated in the park in New York, inside the Arctic Island's waterfall, in a cave on Crescent Island and on the bridge-shaped rock on Holiday Island.
● Vehicle guide in N64/1.

SUPER MARIO 64



Nintendo £60 | N64 1 ● 96% ● ZN

When other developers first caught a glimpse of *SM64*, they went back to the drawing board with their efforts. The game is sublime – taking everything that's made previous *Mario* titles great and fleshing it out into 3D. Mario himself can do just about anything, the levels are huge, packed with incredible ideas and there're loads of secret bits. The world's greatest video game.



● Loads of tips in our review in N64/1.
● '20 most-asked questions', Nintendo Hotline pages in N64/1.

SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

Nintendo £60 | N64 1 ● 78% ● JA

10 levels of varying game styles which somehow fails to be more than the sum of its parts. The fantastic snowspeeder and space battles are ultimately let down by some lack-lustre *Doom*-style bits and the truly awful speeder bike on Luke's home planet, Mos Eisley. It still has a great Star Wars feel, though and is loads better than the PC's *Dark Forces*.



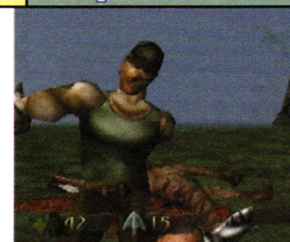
● To see the end sequence, enter your name as _Credits (case sensitive). 'Amusing' credits appear with the game difficulty set to 'Jedi'.
● Challenge point tips in N64/1

TUROK: DINOSAUR HUNTER



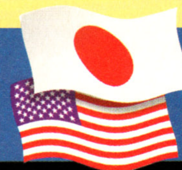
Acclaim £70 | N64 1 ● 90% ● FB

Replacing *Doom's* cyberdemons with screen-filling dinosaurs, cranking up the violence to ludicrously bloody proportions and adding a series of breathtakingly devastating weapons, Acclaim/Iguana have produced – yes – a monster. A phenomenally good game which really shows the technical gulf that exists between the N64 and the other consoles.



● When jumping, you'll find that at the very edge of the platform the screen will dip. This is where you should jump if you're to gain maximum distance.
● Weapons guide in and full cheat listing in N64/1.

Import Games DIRECTORY



CRUIS'N USA

Midway | UK release: TBA | N64 1 ● 62% ● JD

Undoubtedly an accurate conversion of the coin-op. But that, while worth popping the occasional 50p into, is hardly Earth-shattering stuff. Racing across the USA isn't all that tough, even with the irritatingly over-sensitive controls. The music is awful, and the graphics, while functional, use only a fraction of the N64's power. Better racing games will appear.



● At the track selection screen and hold down Left C, Bottom C and L for Golden Gate Park, top C, right C and L for Indiana, or Right C, Bottom C and L for San Francisco.
● More cheats in Tips Extra, **N64**/1.

THE GLORY OF ST ANDREWS

Seta | UK release: Unlikely | N64 1 ● 58% ● TW

The N64's first golf game lacks any redeeming features. A ropey graphical engine – inducing a certain sense of 16-bit déjà vû – and an only partially successful use of the analogue stick as a virtual club. A hugely disappointing golfing debut.



● Use the Player Configuration screen to customise your player's clubs for the course you're about to play.
● No other cheats, at present.

J-LEAGUE PERFECT STRIKER

N64 STAR GAME

Konami | UK release: June (as *ISS64*) | N64 1 ● 89% ● TW

Konami prove their footballing dominance with a magical footballing sim, combining breathtaking animation, a plethora of fantastic moves and some outrageous goals. *Perfect Striker* is as close to The Beautiful Game as any computer game has ever come. In June it becomes *ISS64* for its UK release. *Goal Lazo*, as some would, no doubt, moot.



● Learn how to use the 'kick-ahead-and-run' button (Bottom C) both for attacking and catching opposing players.
● More general playing tips in our review, **N64**/1.

KILLER INSTINCT GOLD

Nintendo | UK release: May | N64 1 ● 62% ● ZN

The *KI2* coin-op met with great success, and this is a perfect conversion of it. But *KI Gold* is a game from a previous era of beat-'em-ups, with its 2D characters, and suffers from an over-reliance on pulling off fancy combos. Wait for a better fighter.



● End any combo with HCB, F+QK as a finisher. This should pull off Maya's enormous Mammouth Fatality.
● Loads of tips in Tips Extra, **N64**/1.

KING OF PRO BASEBALL

Imagineer | UK release: None | N64 1 ● 58% ● TW

The players are super-deformed and cute, and this initially proves tremendously entertaining. If you can fathom the Japanese menus, that is. Eventually, though, the too-slow runners start getting on your nerves.



● Learn to use the 'c' buttons to run your players between bases. Against human opposition it's quite easy to steal 'bases' by running on a strike or a ball.

MAH JONG MASTER

Konami | UK release: None | N64 1 ● 58% ● WO

If you've never played mah jong, this would be a tough way to learn, with its copious Japanese text. If you have, though, it's a jolly good rendition, with a selection of computer personalities to play against and some weird Japlish intro screens.



● If you have a melded triplet, says Wil, and draw the fourth from the wall, you may declare 'kong' and add it to your triplet to make a melded four.

MARIO KART 64

N64 STAR GAME

Nintendo | UK release: June | N64 1 ● 91% ● JD

Mario Kart 64 had a lot to live up to, what with the SNES's *Super Mario Kart* being one of Nintendo's all-time most-loved games. But, bless it, it just about pulls it off, with a whole new world of 3D courses and more complex and subtle kart handling. A variety of modes means it never gets boring, and the four-player split-screen mode is rivetting. A vital purchase.



● Press and hold the accelerator button just as the blue start light comes on. This should give you a turbo-start.
● Get gold on all four cups and a mirror mode option will appear.

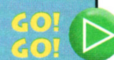
MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY

Midway | UK release: TBA | N64 1 ● 34% ● MH

We're bored of *Mortal Kombat* now, given that it's barely changed over the years and has long-since been superseded by the likes of *Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter*. And it has to be said, this N64 conversion is the final straw. The sound, for one thing, is awful and the animation is, unbelievably, worse than the PlayStation's. Please leave this game alone.



● For unlimited credits, press D, D, U, U, R, R, L, L on the story screen. When you next lose a battle you'll find you're in Freeplay.
● Loads of other cheats and 'Kodes' in Tips Extra, **N64**/1.





NBA HANGTIME

Midway  **UK release:** TBA | N64 1 ● 52% ● JD

Technically, an excellent continuation of the *NBA Jam* series, with huge (albeit 2D players), great animation and sheaves of special moves and secrets. It is, however, basketball at the end of the day, and thus consists of running backwards and forwards, endlessly scoring baskets. Until you fall asleep. We'd rather play a decent football game.



● Create duplicates of star players by entering 0000 as your PIN, and then type in your name as the name of the player. (Try his first name, or first name + initial of surname.)
● More cheats in Tips Extra, **N64**/1.

WAVE RACE 64

Nintendo  **UK release:** April | N64 **Review next issue**

The waves are incredibly convincing, as is the way your jet-ski bounces realistically over them. But that's only the start of it, as this rapidly proves to be an intensely competitive racing game. There's a two-player split-screen mode, too, along with a fearsomely challenging stunt mode. In many ways this is a better racing game than *Mario Kart 64*.



● Press and hold the accelerator just as the announcer says 'Go!'. You'll leap immediately to maximum power.
● Look out for our review and course guide in the next issue of **N64**.

WAYNE GRETZKY'S 3D HOCKEY

Midway  **UK release:** TBA | N64 1 ● 70% ● JD

Ice hockey arcade-style, with violent collisions, an absurdly fast-moving puck and excellent 3D graphics. Wide-ranging options allow you to play anything from rules-free 3-a-side in a reduced rink, to a proper five-a-side simulation with infractions a-plenty. There's not a great deal of subtlety here, but the four-player game is tremendous.



● On the options screen, hold a C button and press R. 16 zeroes will appear at the bottom of the screen. Alter these using the C buttons to change your players' appearances.
● More cheats in Tips Extra, **N64**/1.

WONDER PROJECT J2

Enix  **UK release:** Unlikely | N64 1 ● 55% ● WO

You'll have to be either Japanese-speaking or very 'special' to be able to get to grips with this weird adventure. And when you do it's not all that great. You've got to guide a robotic girl through various 'life' situations with the overall aim of helping her realise her dream of becoming a real person. Which is, you know, nice.



● If Josette flies into a temper and won't co-operate, try winning her back with a 3D pudding. (Er, according to Wil.)

NUMBERS



Games released officially in the UK (ones given English text and optimised for Britain's PAL television system) are either distributed through THE (Nintendo's representative in the Britain) or another games publisher with a base in this country. It's not necessarily the game's developer or original publishers who release the game here. For instance, the Japanese publisher Imagineer have a lot of their games distributed by Ocean in the UK.

Below is a list of all the UK publishing companies who have either released games for Nintendo systems in the past or who have N64 titles definitely in the pipeline. There's a contact number next to each.

Acclaim	(0171) 344 5000	**Interplay**	(01628) 423666
BMG	(0171) 973 0011	**JVC**	(0171) 240 3121
Bullfrog	(0148) 357 9399	**Konami**	(0189) 585 3000
Codemasters	(01926) 814132	**Ocean**	(0161) 832 6633
Eidos	(0121) 625 3366	**Psygnosis**	(0151) 28 3000
Electronic Arts	(01753) 549442	**Telstar**	(01932) 222232
Fox Interactive	(0171) 878 3000	**THE Games**	(01703) 653377
Gametek	(01753) 854444	**THQ**	(01372) 745 222
Gremlin	(01142) 753423	**Tim**	(01225) 442244
GT Interactive	(0171) 258 3791	**Titus**	(0171) 700 2119
HudsonSoft	(0181) 536 1153	**UBISoft**	(0181) 941 4004
Infogrames	(0171) 738 8199	**Virgin**	(0171) 368 2255

Web site of the month

Nintendo Power
www.nintendo.com



What the official Nintendo of America site lacks in detail, reviews and tips, it makes up for with official news and some of the best screenshots of all the newest N64 games. Even though Nintendo's site has a fast server, its being so graphics-intensive means that you might find it a bit slow moving around. The shots of new games do make it worthwhile, though.

Rumour, tall tales and plain lies abound in the murky world of the Internet. But, if you've got the technology, you might also find some interesting N64 gems on a couple of these web sites.

NINTENDO-RELATED AND UNOFFICIAL SITES

Nintendo Power	www.nintendo.com/
Nintendo Japan	www.nintendo.co.jp/
Next Generation	www.next generation.com/
Game Japan (A weekly Net magazine)	www.rcp.co.jp/recca/
The #1 Unofficial N64 Site	www.n64.com/
N64 Headquarters	www.n64hq.com/
Nintendojo	members.aol.com/
N64 Gazetta (UK site)	www.websling.demon.co.uk/
Nintendo 64 Power	www.n64power.com/
Die Hard Game Fan	www.gamefan.com/
Hype (multi-format site)	www.hype.se

GAME COMPANY SITES

Activision	www.activision.com/
3D Realms	www.apogee1.com/
Argonaut	www.argonaut.com/
ASCII	www.asciient.com/
Atlus	www.atlus.com/
Bethesda	www.bethsoft.com/
Blizzard	www.blizzard.com/
Boss	www.bossgame.com/
Capcom	www.capcoment.com/
Crystal Dynamics	www.crystald.com/
Data East	www.dataeast.com/
Eidos	www.eidosinteractive.com/
Electronic Arts	www.ea.com/
Enix	www.marinet.or.jp/com/enix/
Epic Megagames	www.epicgames.com/
Gametek	www.gametek.com/
Graphics School	http://204.174.42.103
GT Interactive	www.gtinteractive.com/
GTE	www.im.gte.com/
Hudson	www.hudson.co.jp/
Human	www.human.co.jp/
Interplay	www.interplay.com/
Konami Japan	www.konami.co.jp/
Konami US	www.konami.com/
LucasArts	www.lucasarts.com/
MicroProse	www.microprose.com/
Midway	www.midway.com/
Mindscape	www.mindscape.com/
MultiGen	www.multigen.com/
Namco US	www.namco.com/
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Raven	www.ravensoft.com/
Shiny	www.shiny.com/
Squaresoft	www.spin.ad.jp/square/
THQ	www.thq.com/
UbiSoft	www.ubisoft.com/
Vic Tokai	www.victokai.com/
Virgin	www.vie.com/
Westwood	www.westwood.com/
Williams	www.williamsentertainment.com/

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NINTENDO 64

How can something so great have been squeezed into so small a box? Let's open one up and see...

LIFTING THE LID

Inside the Nintendo 64



Having sold four million 'units' across the world by the end of 1996, and probably the same again since then, the Nintendo 64 has swiftly established itself as one of the most significant events of the late 20th century. In fact, not since the inventions of electricity, the flushable toilet, the wheel and fire has something been so eagerly snapped-up by the human race.

But why? Surely the Nintendo 64 is just another games console. Surely its arrival is just another step up the technological ladder, like the Saturn, the SNES and the NES were before it.

Ah. But no.

Previous games consoles have been designed by games console manufacturers. They've been based on previous games consoles, and made better – faster graphics, double the 'bits', CD-drives, more sound channels, more buttons on the controller. Nintendo came from the opposite direction entirely with the Nintendo 64. They teamed up with Silicon Graphics, a manufacturer of sophisticated, £10,000 graphics workstations who'd previously been more concerned with creating multi-million-dollar Jurassic Park inhabitants than chubby Italians. And, after doing some complicated sums, they discovered that by chopping out a few non-essential components, and applying ruthless mass-production techniques, they could squeeze much of the power of a £10,000 machine into a box the size of a human lung, and sell it for less than everyone else's old-style consoles.

No-one quite believed them. Back in the middle of 1993, when Nintendo announced their 'Project Reality' deal with Silicon Graphics, Sega and Sony were beginning to steal Nintendo's thunder with their promises of new 32-bit consoles. Nintendo hadn't come up with anything similar,

GO! GO!



after dithering over the SNES CD-drive for ages, and cynics wondered whether they'd just been trying to grab back the headlines by making the most outrageous claim they could think of. But over the months, as more details of Nintendo's new console began to emerge, with incredible-looking pictures of games, it became clear that Nintendo intended to keep their promise.

The result is the Nintendo 64, the first console that allows games designers to do, basically, anything. And the minds of Nintendo's carefully-cultivated band of developers have consequently been allowed to run riot. Shigeru Miyamoto has been able, at last, to create a *Super Mario* game in which his imagination roams without constraint. He's constructed an incredible 3D world where something new and surprising happens around every corner, and which the player can explore with complete freedom. In the States, Paradigm have been able to place *Pilotwings 64* players above a breathtakingly-realistic 3D landscape, providing, for the first time in a video game, a true sense of flight. Link's adventures in the next *Zelda* game will actually be enacted in front of you on the screen, rather than just being 'symbolised' by little sprites and text boxes. *Starfox 64* and *Blast Corps* look awe-inspiringly action-packed and it remains to be seen what's brewing in the minds of developers like Konami and Capcom.

And that's why the Nintendo 64 is causing such a stir. It's a combination of Nintendo's unrivalled talent for developing great games, and something completely different. People who've never before shown much interest in games consoles are looking at *Super Mario 64* in action and being instantly won-over. (We seem to get huge crowds turning up at the **N64** office every lunchtime to try out the latest games.) And, at the same time, Nintendo devotees of old love it as well.

The Nintendo 64 is completely great. But, against our better judgement, over the pages to come we're going to pull one completely to bits in an effort to find out what makes it tick, and answer all those puzzling questions you'll no doubt have about it.

top

MEMORY EXPANSION

Under this hatch sits a socket that allows extra RAM to be added to the N64, supplementing the built-in 4 Megabytes. The extra RAM isn't available yet (the bit of plastic in there at the moment is just an empty 'jumper', bridging the gap in the circuitry), but could be provided later, perhaps with the 64DD (see the news story on page 16) or with a particularly memory-hungry game.



CARTRIDGE PORT

Carts engage with little pegs inside the machine, which, along with the security chips, prevent import carts from running on UK machines.

RESET BUTTON

Resets your N64 if, for instance, you're fed up with the lengthy 'congratulations' sequence on *Mario Kart 64*.



ON/OFF SWITCH

Switches your N64 on. And then off again.

'GROWTH'

Only European N64s have one of these 'growths' on the controller cable. It contains, you'll be intrigued to learn, a ferrite core which is required by EC regulations and stops you electrocuting yourself with the buttons, or something. The 'growth' also doubles up as cable tensioner, so if you accidentally trip over your cable you won't damage it. Hurrah!



CONTROLLER PORTS

The N64 has four chunky, grey controller ports – twice as many as other machines – allowing for four-player games of *Wayne Gretzky* and *Mario Kart 64*. The controller ports receive inputs from the controllers and communicate with Control Paks and the forthcoming Jolt Pak.

The Nintendo 64: From conception to (eurch) birth

June 1993
Following the cancellation of their CD drive, which was to have plugged in underneath the Super NES and compete with Sega's Mega-CD, Nintendo suggest that instead they're going to begin work on a completely new console, separate from the SNES, to be launched in 1995.



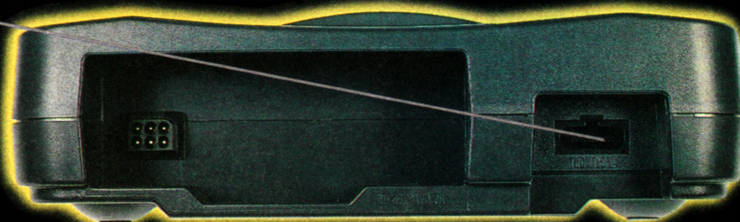
The talk is of a 32-bit machine with a built-in CD drive, selling for under $200 and targeted at the 32-bit console Sega have just revealed they have in development: the Saturn.

August 1993
Nintendo amaze the world by announcing Project Reality, a collaboration between themselves and

back

MULTI-OUT

Connects your N64 to your telly. The N64 produces composite and S-video signals, along with stereo left and right sound channels. (Unlike the Super Nintendo, the N64 doesn't produce an RGB signal.) The RF modulator supplied with the Nintendo 64 then combines all these signals into a single PAL signal, which goes into your TV's aerial socket. For a better picture you can bypass the modulator and use a composite or S-video cable to connect to your TV. See page 16 for details.



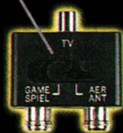


AC ADAPTOR

The black box that slots in here converts a 240V mains supply to the 3.3V and 12V supplies your N64 needs. Your efficient N64 consumes about 15 Watts of power – a quarter of that used by a 60W lightbulb.

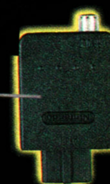
AERIAL SWITCH BOX

Saves you having to keep yanking your TV aerial in and out.

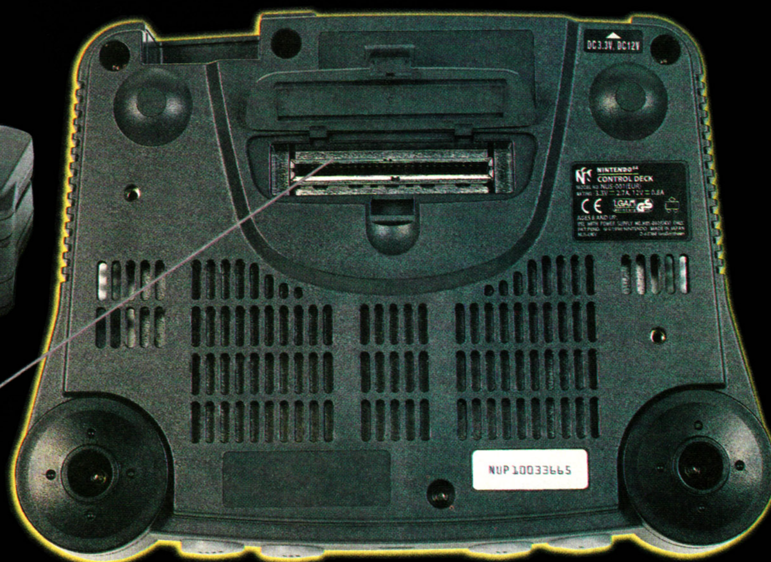


RF MODULATOR

Instead of the stereo AV leads that other European N64s come with, UK machines are supplied with an RF modulator that converts the N64's output to one that can be plugged into any television. If you've got a more expensive television, and want to make the most of it, you'll need to invest in an AV, SCART or S-video cable. (There are some on page 16 of Planet 64.)







bottom

EXPANSION PORT

But how could something so fine as the Nintendo 64 possibly be expanded? With the 64DD, that's how. (See page 16.) And who knows what else Nintendo might have up their sleeves?

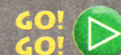
high-end graphics workstation manufacturer Silicon Graphics. The result is intended to be a 64-bit console with the 3D graphics power of a £10,000 Silicon Graphics machine, selling – and this was the really amazing bit – for $250. Sega and



Sony, who'd been discussing $500 price points for their 32-bit machines, mutter comments about 'spoiling tactics'. No-one knows quite whether to believe Nintendo or not, but loads of pictures from Jurassic Park start cropping up everywhere: Silicon Graphics hardware produced the dinosaurs.

March 1994
Nintendo start to assemble their 'Dream Team', a group of developers who'll produce the first games for Project Reality. Initially UK-based Rare sign up along with the American firm Williams. It's also announced that the two companies will together produce the Killer Instinct coin-op, which will later appear as a Project Reality game. Later, companies such as DMA, Paradigm Simulations, Acclaim, Sierra, Angel, LucasArts and Electronic Arts also sign up.

May 1994
Project Reality is still a long way off



what's in the box?

Reality Immersion

The reason Nintendo 64 games look so much better than anything else is the Reality Immersion system that Silicon Graphics and Nintendo's experts have come up with. Reality Immersion is generated by a combination of the CPU and the Reality Co-Processor, and effectively means that your N64 has the essential components of a £10,000 Silicon Graphics workstation.

Some of the more important features of Reality Immersion are:

Anti-aliasing
The edges of shapes are blurred slightly, so you don't get jagged lines on the screen.

Texture mapping
Mapping a 2D pattern of pixels onto a 3D polygon.

Texture detailing
Having more than one texture for a particular object. The machine picks the right one, so detail is preserved as you zoom in.

Tri-linear mip map interpolation
(Good grief.) Mip stands for the Latin "'multi in partem", and the technique involves calculating new textures for objects to stop them going all chunky close-up, and blending pixels together at a distance.

Load management
The number of polygons in an object is varied according to its distance from the viewer, so the frame update rate can be maintained without having to resort to the 'pop-up' or 'fog' effects seen on other machines.

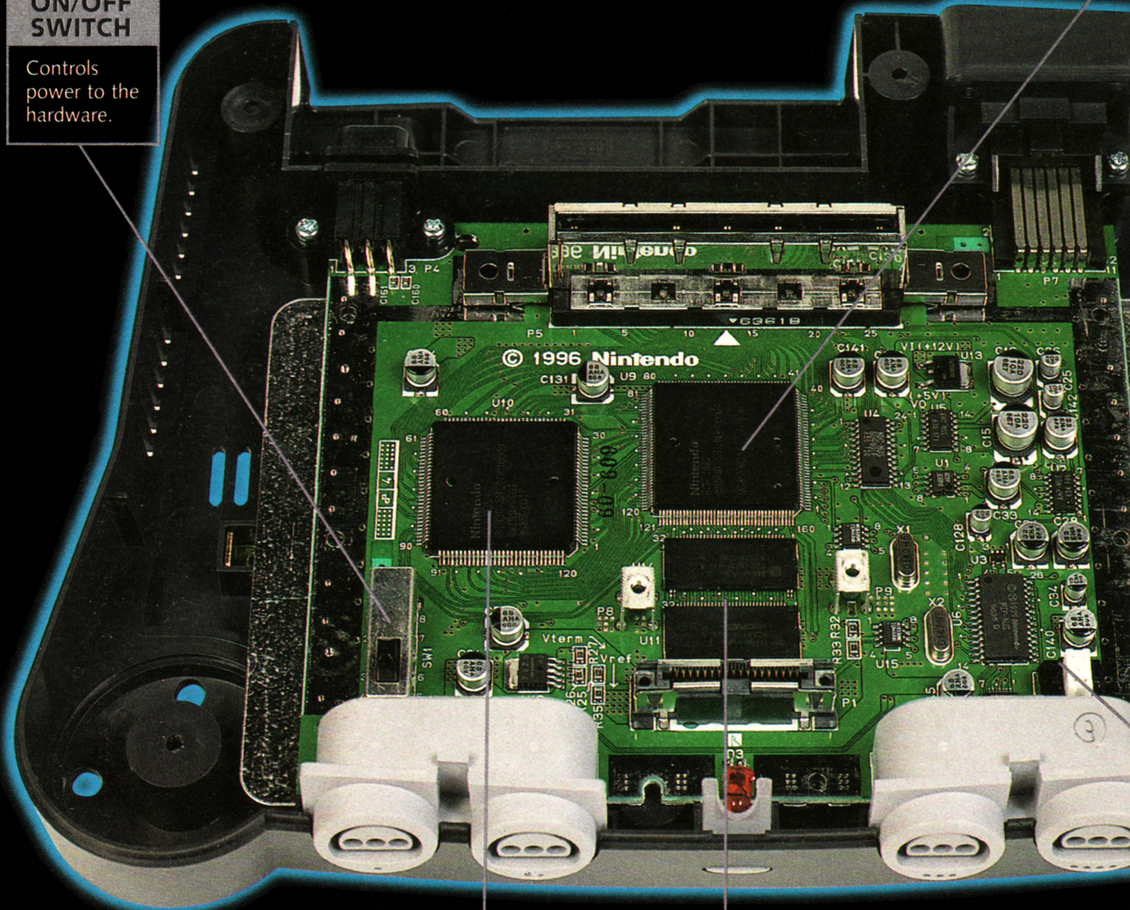
Fog
Although, for the sake of realism, a fog effect can be generated.

Depth buffering
Hidden surfaces aren't drawn, to save processor time.

Gouraud shading
Colours polygons in a way that makes them appear curved.

Specular reflection
Light sources can be reflected off shiny surfaces.

All this is done automatically within the hardware (unlike the PC, PlayStation etc), so the games don't have to worry about it and can spend their time doing more exciting things.



ON/OFF SWITCH

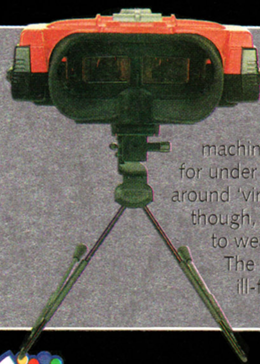
Controls power to the hardware.

CPU

At the heart of the N64 lurks a mighty R4300i CPU, which is responsible for decoding the instructions on game carts and issuing instructions to the rest of the circuitry. It's a 64-bit RISC chip running at 93.75 MHz, getting through 125 MIPS (million instructions per second), and was designed by (slightly confusingly) MIPS, a subsidiary of Silicon Graphics. They're the company that produces the high-performance graphics workstations used by companies like Industrial Light and Magic, the people who're doing all the special effects for (amongst many others) the new Star Wars films.

RAM

The N64 includes 4 Megabytes of on-board RAM (Random Access Memory), and more can be plugged in via the hatch on the top of the machine. RAM is writable as well as readable, so it's used for storing data (scores, the positions of characters and so on) as well as building up the picture that's displayed on the telly. A Rambus D-RAM system allows data to be transferred rates of up to 562.5 Mb per second, and a 128-bit wide data bus will shift two 64-bit numbers at once.



– a year at least – so Nintendo announce a stop-gap. They'll be producing a 32-bit machine after all, but it'll sell for under $200 and be based around 'virtual reality'. Strangely, though, it won't be necessary to wear a special headset. The eventual result is the ill-fated Virtual Boy.

Also, up till now no-one had been sure whether Project Reality would be using CDs, like other so-called 'next generation' consoles, or stick with traditional Nintendo cartridges. Now Nintendo revealed that carts it would be, although they'd be huge, 100 Mbit ones.

July 1994
Project Reality has a new name: Ultra 64. The Nintendo/Silicon-Graphics/Rare alliance produces an early off-shoot, too: *Donkey Kong Country*, which will be developed for the SNES by Rare using Silicon Graphics hardware. The idea is, with Ultra 64 still not due for a year at least.



REALITY CO-PROCESSOR

The N64's breathtaking 3D graphics are largely thanks to this fellow – the Reality Co-Processor (RCP). Like the main CPU it's a 64-bit RISC chip, this time running at 62.5 MHz, and has been designed by Silicon Graphics specifically for the N64. Its main purpose in life is to generate the graphics you see on your TV screen, although it handles the sound side of things as well. The RCP can actually crack through half a billion arithmetic operations per second – about ten times as many as the Pentium processor in an average PC – and will generate around 160,000 rectangular polygons per second with all the N64's special effects enabled. The RCP and the CPU together make what Nintendo call the Reality Immersion system.

RESET SWITCH

Resets the CPU, causing it to restart the current game as if the machine had just been switched on.

carts



One of the most troublesome stumbling blocks on the path to the N64's creation was Nintendo's dilemma over whether to store games on cartridges or CD. All Nintendo's previous consoles had used cartridges, going right back to the NES, while the N64's competitors – the PlayStation and Saturn – had plumped for the more fashionable new CD format. Nintendo issued statements on an almost monthly basis as they first decided to use CD, then cartridges, then CD again, then cartridges, then CD… No-one knew what was going on. In the end, though, Nintendo settled on cartridges, a decision that raised a few eyebrows.

CDs usurped cartridges – at least as far as Sony and Sega were concerned – for obvious reasons. While the amount of space on a cartridge is limited to the number of expensive ROM chips crammed into it, a CD can store an inconceivable amount – well over 600 Megabytes (Mb), compared to the 16Mb (or 128 Megabits) of *Turok*, the largest N64 cartridge so far. More importantly, a CD costs about 30p to manufacture, while the complex electronics in a cartridge cost several pounds. And, of course, cartridges tend to be viewed as 'old technology', while CDs seem new and exciting.

From Nintendo's point of view, however, cartridges still had the edge. They're much harder for bootleggers to copy, for a start, and Nintendo's security chip makes it extremely hard for third-party games developers to circumvent Nintendo and manufacture their own cartridges. Access times of cartridges are virtually zero, so you don't have to sit staring at "Loading – please wait" messages. Battery back-up can be incorporated into cartridges, so positions and scores can be saved in them. Cartridges don't get scratched (a major problem with PlayStation CDs). And there's no need to incorporate a costly and potentially unreliable CD drive into the machine. And in any case, the full capacity of CDs is rarely used, with the actual game code taking up just a few Megabytes while the remainder tends to be filled with music and video footage of questionable benefit.

The Nintendo 64's hardware, meanwhile, makes it possible to create huge 3D worlds like *Super Mario 64*'s just by specifying a few polygon co-ordinates, so enormous games can be squeezed into tiny spaces – *Pilotwings 64*, for instance, fits into less than 7Mb. And, better still, the N64's hardware includes data-decompression, so there's more actually packed into each cart than there might appear. If more space really is required (say for huge RPG games) the forthcoming 64DD drive (see Planet 64, page 16) should provide ample. This extra storage will also be writable, allowing players to customise games.

Inside a cart

ROM

The cost of memory chips is drifting gently downwards all the time, so N64 carts can be much heftier than their SNES forebears. A typical N64 cart is 64 Mbit (8 Megabytes), with *Mario Kart 64* coming in at 96 Mbit, 128 Mbit carts on the horizon, and a theoretical maximum of 256 Mbit.

Save-game chip

SNES cartridges used to store data in a small RAM chip supported by a battery. N64 carts, on the other hand, have a more sophisticated system involving an EEPROM (Electronically Erasable Programmable Read-Only Memory) chip that can store data without the need for a battery. It's only tiny (it'll record your *Mario Kart* lap times and cups, but you'll need a Controller Pak to store Time Attack ghosts), but is another thing that's just not possible with CD systems.



to show that the SNES still has life in it yet.



November 1994

Sega launch their 32-bit Saturn, nearly a year before Ultra 64's projected release date. Nothing has yet been seen of any Ultra 64 games.

January 1995

Silicon Graphics announce that the chips that will power the Ultra 64 are complete, and that the machine is on target to be launched by the end of the year. And, most importantly, it will be just as powerful as they'd always claimed.

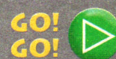
May 1995

Bad news. The Ultra 64 isn't going to be ready for the summer after all. The Japanese release date is now set at December, at Nintendo's Shoshinkai exhibition, with the US and Europe getting machines the following April. No reason has ever been officially given, but it seems likely that the hold-up was with software. The Dream Team hadn't come up with anything that used the machine's full potential, and Nintendo's own internal development teams, led by Shigeru Miyamoto, were running late. At the time, it looked like a costly delay for Nintendo.

August 1995

Hints are dropped about the Ultra 64's controller, which will be 'revolutionary', providing more control over games than has ever been possible before.

GO! GO!



taking control

Nintendo always lead the way with their controllers. When they launched the NES, everyone else was using clumsy joysticks and paddles; now joypads are the standard. When the SNES came out, the shoulder buttons on its controller were unique, and a vital aspect of *Mario Kart's* steering; now everyone includes shoulder buttons on their joypads. And the Nintendo 64's analogue joystick is such a huge leap forward for video games that other manufacturers will have no option but to sheepishly follow suit. Just you see.

L AND R BUTTONS

As featured on the SNES controller, and likely to see much the same sort of use – cycling through weapons and so on.

Z TRIGGER

Used for launching rockets and taking photographs in *Pilotwings*, and using power-ups in *Mario Kart*. It's nice to have it there, although it can sometimes be awkward to use at the same time as the joystick.

D-PAD

This is the standard directional control, as seen on a hundred other controllers. Most N64 games are likely to use the analogue instead, although the two could be combined to provide a 3D movement and looking-around system in, say, a 64 version of *Quake*. The N64's D-pad is identical to the excellent one on the Super Nintendo.

CONTROLLER PAK SLOT

Controller Paks (onto which you can save personal data like scores and set-ups) and the Jolt Pak plug in here, and there's talk of a slot-in light gun.



JOYSTICK

This innocuous-looking, mushroom-shaped object is in fact the most innovative and vital part of the 64's controller. It's an analogue joystick providing 360° movement (rather than the up, down, left, right and diagonals of ordinary controllers) in varying amounts (rather than just on or off). Push it forward slightly, for example, and Mario will tip-toe. Push it further forwards and he'll jog, then run, then sprint. The joystick also lets you make smooth, gentle turns in *Pilotwings 64*, aim precisely at dinosaurs in *Turok*, and steer *Mario Kart* in gradual increments.

A AND B BUTTONS

These are your main fire buttons. There's nothing special about them at all.

COLOURED CONTROLLERS

Don't like grey? N64 controllers are also available in red, blue, green, yellow and black. The Japanese get a grey-and-black *Mario Kart* one, too.



C GROUP BUTTONS

There are four of these – the perfect number for moving the view up, down, left and right in *Mario 64* and *Pilotwings*, and walking about in *Turok*. In *Wayne Gretzky* and *Perfect Striker*, on the other hand, they're used for intricate attacking and defending moves, something they're not ideally placed for.



November 1995
At Nintendo's Shoshinkai show in Japan, 11 Ultra 64 games are displayed to the public for the first time. They look just as impressive as Nintendo had promised, although only two are playable, and none is anywhere near finished. The release date is correspondingly pushed back to April world-wide. And the name is changed again, too: to Nintendo 64.

February 1996
Oh dear. The Nintendo 64 now won't arrive in Japan until June, America until September with no release date at all set for Europe. But anticipation for the machine is now reaching fever pitch with *Super Mario 64* in particular causing an increasing stir.

June 1996
At last! The Nintendo 64 goes on sale in Japan on June 23rd, and sells 300,000 on its first day alone – equivalent to the first-day sales of the PlayStation and Saturn combined. Practically everyone buys a copy of *Super Mario 64* to go with their new machine. *Pilotwings 64* and *Shogi Chess* are the only other games available.

September 1996
The Nintendo goes on sale in the US with the initial 500,000 machines available selling out immediately.

March 1997
Europe at last gets its hands on the N64. At £250 the N64 sells out instantly in the UK, although that's unsurprising given that only 20,000 are brought into the country initially.

playing import games

While the Nintendo 64 has only just been launched in Europe, and only a handful of games are officially available for it, it's been out in America since last September and in Japan since June, and has built up a sizable catalogue of games in these countries. And, while many third-party developers like Acclaim and Ocean are releasing games virtually simultaneously across all territories, Nintendo themselves are delaying European release dates to, they claim, give each game some breathing space. So *Mario Kart 64*, available in Japan since December and the US since February, won't be reaching Europe until June.

That's an awful long time to wait, so many European N64 owners are likely to want to play the latest games as soon as they become available in the US and Japan. The only way to do this at the moment is by using an N64 sold outside Europe, which will contain a US/Japanese securuty chip. But within the next few weeks companies like Datel and Fire will be producing adaptors allowing import games to run on standard UK machines. We'll have more news of these in the next couple of issues.

Meanwhile, if you're planning to get a US or Japanese machine, there are a couple of things you need to know...

Using Japanese and US N64s in the UK

To play games on a US or Japanese machine – bought from an importer (several advertise in **N64** Magazine) or brought back from your hols as a 'souvenir' – you'll need two things. First you'll want a multi-standard television that's capable of displaying an NTSC signal as well as the normal PAL one. Most televisions bought in the last couple of years should be fine, and Sony ones seem particularly compatible. Imported N64s come with three phono outputs for video and the two audio channels, which can either be connected to similar inputs on your television or, via an adaptor, to a SCART socket. Alternatively you may be able to track down a Nintendo S-video cable, which will give a slightly better picture if you've got an S-video input on your telly. The other thing you'll need is a step-down transformer to provide a 110/120 Volts AC supply for your machine. These cost about £30 from electronics shops like Tandy. Finally, if you want to be able to play both US and Japanese games on your import machine you'll need either to make a small modification to its innards (see below), or to invest in a bridge adaptor.



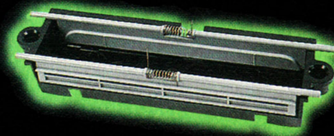
Disabling the 'lock-out' on import machines

The only thing preventing US and Japanese carts from being interchangeable on US and Japanese machines are two pegs on a plastic rail inside the N64, which are spaced differently on the two machines. This rail can easily be removed, although doing so will invalidate any warranty your machine may have. (And we're not responsible if you break your N64 in the process.) The more expensive, though safer, alternative is to buy a bridge adaptor. (See Planet 64 on page 16.)

Step 1 Open the machine
Tricker than it may sound, owing to the curious screws favoured by Nintendo. A suitable screwdriver (a ZE1 tamperproof one) can be obtained from electronics suppliers, such as Maplin. Watch out for the RAM jumper while you're removing the lid.



Step 2
Locate and disable the rail
It's that bit of plastic into which the cartridge slots, with the two pegs on. Either unscrew and remove it, in which case you'll lose the use of the plastic dust flaps that protect the cart slot, or carefully take a hacksaw to the pegs and get rid of them.



Step 3
Reassemble your N64
You'll now be able to play both Japanese and American games.

All that remains now is for us to work out how all this stuff goes back together again. Hmm. Now, where does this little green bit go...

WHAT CART?

Nintendo 64 carts from around the world might look identical. But are they? Ooh no, missus.

AMERICAN CARTS

Although the code on the ROMs may be different, American N64 carts are electronically identical to Japanese carts.



JAPANESE CARTS

Japanese carts have a slightly different casing to US ones, to discourage imports, although a simple modification makes the two machines compatible.



HONG KONG CARTS

Carts bought in Hong Kong, interestingly, have American code (English language) but have holes in the Japanese style.



UK CARTS

UK machines and carts, meanwhile, have different security chips inside, and aren't interchangeable with US and Japanese machines and carts without an adaptor.



NEXT MONTH: N64 EXPLORES THE HISTORY OF NINTENDO, AND SPEAKS TO SHIGURU MIYAMOTO, THE FATHER OF MARIO!

WIN!

Your prize won't be exactly like this, you can't have us, for example.

"Curse you and your banana antics!"



"Gahhhh! This game is rubbish!!!"



Tim enjoys a rare victory.



"Fire that shell and you're dead son."



The Ultimate Nintendo 64 Evening In!

One lucky N64 reader will be filling his bedroom with a Nintendo 64, a massive telly, four special N64 chairs and piles of other goodies!



With this being the first issue of N64 Magazine, we decided something just a little bit special was in order. And damn it to Milton Keynes and back if we haven't gone and single-handedly made sure Dixons stay in profit this year.

As well as providing one of our lucky readers with a Nintendo 64, the most exciting development in video games since the invention of Pong, we've gone a whole three stages further. You see, one of the best things about the N64 is the fact that four people can play on it at once. So, along with a console, we're giving away four N64 joypads (of varying colours), a television the size of a semi-detached (so you'll be able to see everything even in *Mario Kart's* 4-player mode) and an exclusive set of four **N64** Magazine chairs. On top of all that, we'll also include all the crisps and drinks you'll need to sustain you through the night.

In total, this truck-filling lot would set you back something akin to Jonathan's weekly wage. (*Tish* – Ed.) But money concerns us not: we're quite prepared to send them out in all their technological glory to one oh-so-lucky reader.

But, alas, there's a small catch. With this being a particularly large, not to say pricey, set of circuits, chair legs and additives, you'll have to put the old noggin to use and prove to us that you're a true Nintendo fan and worthy of this illustrious prize. So grab a pen and answer the questions on the coupon below. You'll find all the answers, or clues at least, in this issue of **N64** Magazine. As if you'll need to look.



MY ANSWERS ARE

1	What day of the week was the Nintendo 64 released in Japan?	
2	Which *MK* character will star in *Mortal Kombat Mythologies*?	
3	What's Jonathan's fastest Time Attack time on Mario Circuit?	
4	Name two teams in Japan's J-League.	
5	How many stars are needed to complete *Super Mario 64*?	

AND I AM...

Name ....

Address ....

....

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The Tedious Rules bit

- Entries to arrive by Tuesday, May 13th 1997. In envelopes.
- Only one entry per household. Sorry, mum.
- No employees of Future Publishing, associated companies, their friends, family or milkmen are eligible to enter.
- The editor's decision, though quiet, will be very much final.

If you don't want to cut up your magazine then just send a photocopy of this coupon.

SEND IT TO: The Mad As A Lorry Compo, **N64** Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.



N64 MAGAZINE ISSUE 2

BLAST CORPS



You've oggled at the pictures on pages 12 and 13. Now prepare yourself to be bulldozed by a complete review of Nintendo's next masterpiece. In the second issue of N64 Magazine we'll conquer the Japanese version of Blast Corps, destroying buildings, crushing vehicles, triggering massive explosions and chipping paint.

WAVE RACE 64

We'll be reviewing the UK version of this racer in incredible depth, providing everything you'll need to know to get the most out of it.





FIFA 64

Can *FIFA* match up to Konami's forthcoming *International Superstar Soccer 64* (née *J-League Perfect Striker*)? We'll play it and see.

In Import Arena...

It's never easy to predict the release of games abroad, but here's what we're hoping to see next month:

DOOM 64

We've played an almost-finished version, and it looked superb. Prepare for a full review next month.

BLADE & BARREL

Kemco's split-screen shoot-'em-up.

POWERFUL PRO BASEBALL 4

Konami's baseball players are even dinkier than Imagineer's *King of Pro* lot.

HUMAN GRAND PRIX

Our hearts are revving in anticipation.

Strategy guides

SUPER MARIO 64

Zy's going to be explaining in detail how to get 70 stars as quickly and efficiently as possible.

TUROK DINOSAUR HUNTER

We've been tearing our hair out over this so that you don't have to do the same. Next month we'll reveal the whereabouts of all the keys and weapons.

SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

James knows where all the Challenge Points are. He promises that next month he'll tell all.

N64 MAGAZINE Issue 2 on sale Thursday, April 24th

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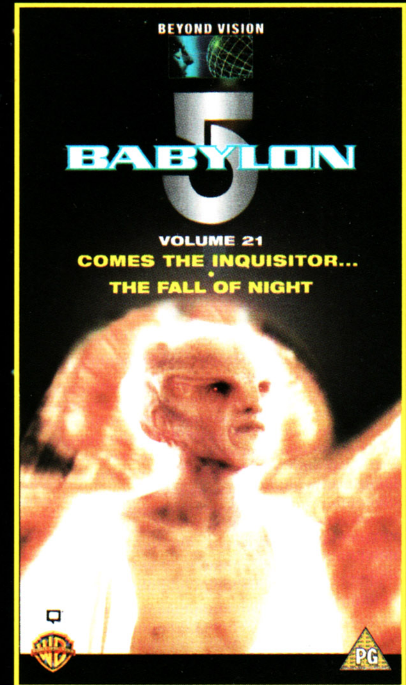
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TUROK: DINOSAUR HUNTER
MARIO KART 64



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